Man accused of driving under the influence allegedly hits cyclist. PAGE 3
Japanese male choir to perform at memorial sites. PAGE 6

Hafa Adai!

$1

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$121.4M in outstanding collectibles

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

» Gov't, private employers not remitting $30M in employee quarterly withholdings

Norita

The Department of Finance has $121.4 million in total outstanding collectibles from account receivables from the past 10 years, including $30 million in employee quarterly withholdings that were not remitted by employers, according to Finance Secretary Tracy B. Norita on Friday.

See $121.4M on Page 4

SHOW OF APPRECIATION CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Members of Triple J Saipan and service members take a group photo during Innovative Readiness Training Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands on July 12, 2023. IRT CNMI provides no-cost healthcare to the community. From left, Triple J Saipan marketing manager Brad Ruszala, Commonwealth Bureau of Military Affairs special assistant Daniel Aquino, Triple J senior vice president R. Dan Murrell, next eight are service members, Triple J Construction operations manager Mario Valentino, Triple J legal counsel Jose Mafnas, and Triple J Human Resources director Francisco Ada.

Norita: No issue with municipal employees' lump sum payments

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Saipan Mayor Ramon "RB" Camacho recently discovered that there was a total of $98,137.14 in lump sum payments of accrued annual leave for former and current municipal employees that were taken from his funds.

See NORITA on Page 4

Sugarking band wins big at Battle of the Bands

By CHRYSTAL MARINO
chrystal_marino@saipantribune.com
Correspondent

The five-man Sugarking Band took home the top three prizes at the Battle of the Bands competition during the 2023 Liberation festivities last Saturday,

See SUGARKING on Page 4

CHRYSTAL MARINO

2023 Liberation Day Committee members and Battle of the Band judges pose with this year's competition winner, the Sugarking band, after Saturday's event at Garapan Fishing Base in Kristo Rai.

US House OKs bill that provides $78M for 3 Tinian divert projects

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Sablan

The U.S. House of Representatives approved Friday a legislation that allocates benefits for the Marianas, including $78 million for three previously authorized Tinian airport divert projects.

With the Houses' approval

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INSIDE

BUSINESS
United introduced a new domestic first class seat that includes a wireless charging station.
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NATION
Baltimore's troubled history with policing is thrust into the national spotlight once again.
PAGE 12

LIFE & STYLE
Lea Salonga is back on the stage on Broadway where she is leading an all-Filipino cast.
PAGE 15

SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

PCG CORE VOLUNTEERS PHOTO

OWWA OUTREACH BEGINS TODAY

A six-day outreach by the Philippine Overseas Workers Welfare Administration will be held starting today, July 17, at the Sun Palace Hotel to serve the needs of the thousands of Filipino foreign workers in the CNMI. Assisted and facilitated by the Philippine Consulate General-Agaña core volunteers for the CNMI, the three-person team, comprised by Prescilla Pamela Flores, chief, Membership Processing Center; Mercedes M. ILano, OWWO IV, Overseas Operations Coordination Service; and Zara Zits P. Reyes, administrative assistant III, Fund and Investment Management Office, arrived yesterday and were welcomed by the PCG core volunteers Annamae Adaza, Mario Mayuga, Ariel Mariano and Ulysses Torres-Sabuco.

Local

Remembrance walk for bereaved parents on July 27

In honor of parents who have lost children, the annual "Walk to Remember" is scheduled to take place on Thursday, July 27, at 5:30pm. The event host, We Remember Them CNMI, is inviting bereaved parents and community members to join them on this walk.

Participants in this year's walk will meet at the pavilion just north of The Shack on Beach Road and walk to the Atkins Kroll Intersection.

Bereaved parents are welcome to bring photos of their late child/children who will be honored on the walk.

July is National Bereaved Parents Month, a time to raise awareness of all parents who have lost a child of any age and from any cause. National Bereaved Parents Day was observed on Monday, July 3.

We Remember Them CNMI is a local grief support group whose mission is to join people together to honor and remember loved ones and share hope. It was formerly known as The Compassionate Friends of Saipan, a chartered chapter of The Compassionate Friends/USA, a national nonprofit, self-help organization offering friendship, understanding, and hope to families grieving the death of a child of any age, from any cause.

TCF has no religious affiliation, and no individual membership fees or dues are charged. All bereaved family members are welcome.

For more information, contact Donna Krum at (670) 783-1900 or donnakrum@gmail.com. ***(PR)***

PET OF THE WEEK

Magas

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Magas

Magas is a 1- to 2-year-old male dog who has captured the hearts of many with his incredible journey of survival and transformation.

Magas was left to die after being hit by a truck. However, a good Samaritan reported him to Saipan Humane Society to save him from suffering the pain. Although the initial prognosis suggested the need for humane euthanasia, the SHS team refused to give up on Magas. Instead, they rallied resources and ensured he received the best possible care until a skilled veterinarian was available to perform the life-changing amputation surgery.

Throughout his rehabilitation of amputation surgery, Magas proved to be a true fighter, displaying remarkable strength and determination.

Magas has shown amazing progress in his socialization skills. While he may need a slow introduction to other dogs, he has demonstrated his ability to coexist peacefully with them. His eagerness to learn has resulted in him mastering commands such as sitting and patiently waiting for meals, a testament to his intelligence and adaptability.

With his traumatic past behind him, Magas now seeks a loving forever home where he can continue to grow and thrive. While he may be a bit introverted initially, he is quick to warm up and form deep bonds once he feels safe and secure.

Magas' ideal family would provide him with patience, understanding, and a nurturing environment, allowing him to blossom into the wonderful companion he is destined to be.

Magas is in foster home but if you're interested, contact the Saipan Mayor's Office Animal Shelter in As Perdido at (670)-234-3647 (DOGS). Shelter hours are from Monday to Friday, 7:30am to 4:30pm.

Saipan Tribune *is partnering with Lauren Cabrera, founder of the Saipan Humane Society, in collaboration with the SMO Animal Shelter in As Perdido, to feature their adoptable dogs into loving homes. Whether you are looking for a guard dog, lap dog, hiking buddy, or playful puppy, they most likely have the dog for you!*

Palacios: Torres gave Tinian extra $3.6M ARPA funds

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios said Thursday that he fully understands where Tinian and Aguiguan Mayor Edwin P. Aldan is coming from, that about 124 Tinian Mayor's Office employees will be out of jobs come Oct. 1, 2023.

"At the end of the day, it's not a hell of a lot of funding," said Palacios in an interview.

Speaking before the House of Representatives Ways and Means Committee's Fiscal 2024 budget hearing for the Tinian municipality, Aldan had described Palacios' proposed budget as "unbalanced" and "frustrating" for the municipality.

Palacios

Aldan said he has been in politics for over 20 years and that he has never seen a budget proposal that excludes a mayor's office from the general fund.

The mayor said the governor's proposal intends to include $3 million in American Rescue Plan Act funds that is currently being held in the Tinian Municipal Treasury to cover the difference. He said these funds will not be available on Oct. 1, 2023, as most of the funds have already been allocated.

Palacios said Thursday that the recommendation of the Office of the Governor's staff that was preparing the 2024 budget for Tinian and Aguiguan was that the $3.6 million in additional American Rescue Plan Act is not the municipality's allocation. The governor said that money is additional ARPA that was given to Tinian before then-governor Ralph DLG Torres left office.

Palacios said he is glad that Aldan put together his spending plan for that money. He said Aldan could use that $3 million to take care of the employees.

The governor said they are trying to make sure that they balance this 2024 budget.

He said the Municipality of Rota and Saipan did not get any extra additional ARPA funding like the Municipality of Tinian.

Palacios pointed out that when he submitted his proposed budget to the Legislature, they certainly went through the process. He said the Legislature also has a process to go through.

"We'll see where that comes out. We have to see hopefully before Oct. 1, where the process is, and then we can sit down and take a look at it," the governor said.

Aldan submitted a budget request of $10.7 million, but Palacios' budget proposal of $4.6 million reflects a significant cut of $6.1 million, equivalent to a cut of 57%.

OGM's Cabrera questions CUC's plan to enter agreement with IPP in 2025

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Office of Grants Management clearinghouse administrator Epiphanio E. Cabrera Jr. questioned last Thursday the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. apparent plan to hammer out an agreement with an independent power producer in 2025.

Speaking before the Senate Fiscal Affairs Committee's hearing on the 2024 budget for OGM, Cabrera said he was giving CUC a heads-up when he disclosed during a recent CUC board meeting that the CNMI is about to receive a $25-million grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for the installation of solar panels on rooftops of homes.

"Because if you think about it, they're trying to [have an] independent power producer agreement in 2025. But why would you have a big company come in if you already have all the solar [panels] on top of residential homes?" Cabrera asked.

He reiterated that once the CNMI gets that $25 million, that will have a big financial impact on CUC in the next year or two.

Cabrera

Sen. Celina R. Babauta (D-Saipan) asked Cabrera if he has a name of that independent power producer, but Cabrera advised Babauta to ask CUC instead.

"Because I'm hearing a name. But I'm concerned about that name actually," Babauta said.

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios had proposed a $1 budget for OGM in Fiscal Year 2024. OGM normally does not submit a proposed budget as it operates using its indirect costs.

Fiscal Affairs Committee chair Sen. Donald M. Manglona (Ind-Rota) said at the start of the hearing that they want to

See OGM'S on Page 4

ARMATECH

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Man accused of driving under the influence allegedly hits cyclist

The Department of Public Safety has arrested a man for allegedly driving under the influence of alcohol and hitting a cyclist.

According to a DPS news release, DPS 911 dispatch received a call at around 12:29am Thursday morning about an auto-pedestrian crash on Chalan Pale Arnold Road, southwest of U-Luck Poker II in Gualo Rai.

Police officers came upon a bicyclist lying on the road that was marked with pedestrian crosswalk. The cyclist, who was being helped by a bystander, had visible injuries and was immediately brought to the Commonwealth Health Center by a Department of Fire and Medical Services ambulance.

A witness told DPS officers that a silver Toyota Tacoma was driving on the northbound outer lane of Chalan Pale Arnold earlier that morning when it hit the bicyclist, who had just exited the poker arcade driveway and was headed west.

The witness told police that the silver pickup hit the victim, stopped on the shoulder of the road, and then left without getting down.

At around 12:55am that same morning, a patrol officer located the silver Toyota pickup and the driver at a Garapan residence. The driver was arrested on charges of driving under the influence and reckless driving.

The suspect, who has yet to be identified, was transported to the Department of Public Safety where he was booked and detained.

This case is still under further investigation. ***(Kimberly B. Esmores)***

Job Vacancy Announcement

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EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) Judiciary is seeking a highly motivated individual for the position of:

FAMILY COURT SERVICES SPECIALIST
On the Island of SAIPAN
Announcement # JVA23-021

DUTIES: The successful candidate will work under the general supervision of the Presiding Judge of the Commonwealth Superior Court and direct supervision of the Family Court Manager or his/her designee. The duties of this position include, but are not limited to the following:

- Assist Pro Se clients when they come to the Family Court Division seeking assistance in filing their case;
- Assist in the development and enhancement of Family Court programs;
- Maintain and promote positive workflow with all agencies involved in the processing and distribution of Family Court cases;
- Participate in court and special hearings for Family Court cases;
- Assist the courtroom clerks with docketing and scheduling of hearings for Family Court cases;
- Assist in the distribution of orders, pleadings and other documents in Family Court cases;
- Coordinate and schedule home assessments as well as process referral orders for those court clients referred to social mental health services;
- Conduct interviews of court clients and their families; analyze the information, identify possible problem areas, make recommendations concerning the case, and make referrals to other social service agencies;
- Input case information into the JustWare Case Management System and the Lexis Nexis E-filing system;
- Attend meetings as a representative of the Family Court Division;
- Assist in planning and coordination of Family Court trainings/ conferences;
- Maintain and monitor the Family Court Division's goals and objectives which will include the preparation of quarterly reports, compilation of case statistics and processing of purchase requisitions;
- Adhere to and comply with all promulgated policies, standards and codes of ethical conduct and perform other related duties as assigned; and
- Performs other related duties as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS: The Family Court Services Specialist should have High School Diploma or equivalent from an accredited college with an Associate of Arts (A.A.) degree in social work, criminal justice, or related service, plus one (1) year of experience in clerical, data collection, or similar field.

Candidate must provide current police and traffic clearances and proof of eligibility to work in the CNMI. Must have a valid drivers' license and operate a court vehicle. Applicants given a conditional offer of employment with the CNMI Judiciary will be required to submit to urinalysis to screen for the illegal use of drugs prior to employment. "Illegal drug" means a substance whose use or possession is controlled by federal law but that is not being used or possessed under the supervision of a licensed health care professional. (Controlled substances are listed in Schedules I-V of 21 C.F.R. Part 1308.)

Education completed in foreign colleges or universities may be used to meet the job qualification requirements if the applicant can show that foreign education is comparable to education received in accredited educational institutions in the United States.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide such evidence when applying for Judiciary jobs. Education received in foreign colleges or universities will be considered if the candidate submits an evaluation of the coursework from: (a) an accredited U.S. college or university; or (b) a private professional organization specializing in interpretation of foreign educational credentials.1

COMPENSATION AND TENURE: This position is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the Presiding Judge. The salary range will be $25,000 - $30,000 annually.

INTERESTED PERSONS Application forms are available at the Judiciary Administrative Office at the Guma Hustisia/Ilimwal Aweewe/House of Justice in Susupe, or at the Superior Court offices at Kotten Tinian on Tinian and Centron Hustisia on Rota during normal business hours except on weekends and holidays. Completed applications, cover letter, and three references should be submitted to:

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This job announcement will remain open until filled and can be seen and a printable copy of the application downloaded at http://www.nmijudiciary.gov
The Judiciary reserves the right to rescind or cancel this JVA at any time without notice.

THE CNMI JUDICIARY IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROVIDER AND EMPLOYER.

[1] The following organizations evaluate foreign educational credentials for employment and other purposes. All operate on a fee based on the extent of the education to be evaluated; applicants shall bear the cost of evaluation.
(a) Credentials Evaluation Service P.O. Box 24679 Los Angeles, CA 90024
(b) Education Equivalency Evaluation World Education Services P.O. Box 745 Old Chelsea Station New York, NY 10011
(c) Education Credential Evaluators, Inc. P.O. Box 17499 Milwaukee, WI 53217
(d) International Consultants of Delaware, Inc. 914 Pickett Lane Newark, DE 19711
(e) Foundation for International Services, Inc. P.O. Box 230278 Portland, OR 97223.
While the Judiciary offer these addresses as information to applicants who request assistance in obtaining an evaluation of foreign education, these services are not preferred over others which may exist.

Docomo Pacific donates to Un Marianas Dinner Concert

Docomo Pacific has signed up as a sponsor to an event focused on benefiting those recently stricken by Super Typhoon Mawar on Guam and Rota.

Docomo Pacific has become a silver sponsor to the upcoming Un Marianas Dinner Concert with $1,500 donation to the Music of the Marianas Association.

MMA

From left, Brent Deleon Guerrero, brand manager, Docomo Pacific; JJ Concepcion, president, Music of the Marianas Association; Justin Yu, customer service representative lead, Docomo Pacific; Ross Manglona, resident executive, Indigenous Affairs Office; and Gus Litulumar, treasurer, Music of the Marianas Association.

The Un Marianas Dinner Concert will be held at the Aqua Resort Club poolside on July 14, with the funds raised to be donated to Typhoon Mawar victims. Tickets are being sold at $100 per person throughout the island as MMA volunteers continue their efforts at selling tickets.

The donation helps the group of island musicians get closer to their goal of sending construction-related supplies to Guam and Rota. According to MMA treasurer Gus Litulumar, their efforts are focused on helping island neighbors get back to normalcy. "During [Super Typhoon] Yutu, we too struggled without basic amenities like air-conditioning and so we feel for our brothers and sisters on those islands enduring this now," he said.

Docomo Pacific is a reliable stakeholder as they've come out to help on various occasions, according to Ross Manglona, resident executive of the Indigenous Affairs Office that is assisting the nonprofit group in its coordination efforts. "It's the relationships we've maintained over the years. Their staff are composed of our locals who grew up here and we should be proud of that fact," Manglona added.

Brent Deleon Guerrero, Docomo Pacific's brand manager, said that, although the experience of each passing typhoon doesn't get easier, "it is through our community and the power of music that we find the strength to rebuild and come back stronger. It is this essence that our promise of being 'Better Together' stems from, and we are happy to be a part of the cause with the hope that it will inspire others to do the same."

Manglona said the CNMI community is fortunate to have stakeholders like Deleon Guerrero and his colleagues at Docomo Pacific that come out when they are needed most. So far, about 200 tickets to the dinner concert have been sold and "hopefully, we continue selling aggressively as the event gets closer. I remain confident that our community will come out and for sure we're going to have a grand ole' time," he said. ***(PR)***

$121.4M

From page 1

With that much money being left on the table, the department's Tax Collection Task Force has set an initial target of collecting on these outstanding receivables within 180 days, according to Norita during an appearance before the Senate Fiscal Affairs Committee's Fiscal Year 2024 budget for Finance.

Even if the task force only has a 5% success rate, they would still realize at least $6,071,445 out of the $121,428,909 in total outstanding collectibles in the next six months, Norita said.

"Of course 5% is the minimum, but we want to go more than that," she said.

If they collect as much as 20%, that would translate to $24.2 million, she added.

Norita disclosed these numbers to explain efforts by the department to beef up their enforcement section.

At the start of the budget hearing, Fiscal Affairs Committee chair Sen. Donald M. Manglona (Ind-Rota) said they are going to address some of Finance's needs, but also mainly to investigate what has been proposed by the administration and where the CNMI is currently at in its collection and how that would play into next fiscal year's projections, among other things.

Norita said one of their actions is the Tax Collection Task Force, which consists of the Department of Finance's Revenue and Taxation, Department of Commerce, Zoning Board, Scholarship Office, and other agencies that are already regulatory agencies that are familiar with enforcement and customer service.

She said these agencies will be assisting the Department of Finance in its collection activity.

The Finance secretary said the task force members had already attended disclosure certification training and will be doing a collection boot camp and will be going out and making their presence felt in the community.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

ERRATUM

A story titled "First day of vet IRT benefits 6 pets" published on *Saipan Tribune*'s printed edition on July 14, 2023, incorrectly implied that the whole IRT Operation CNMI Wellness served only six pets on the first day. This was incorrect, as the crew served a rough estimate of over 30 pets that day. Our apologies for the error.

NORITA

From page 1

Upon discovering this, Camacho wrote Finance Secretary Tracy B. Norita on July 6, 2023, saying he was "shocked to discover that there is now less money in the Office of the Saipan Mayor's account than what was supposed to be there in the beginning of the third quarter of the current fiscal year."

He further stated that his office and the MOS Human Resources office did not request for the lump sum payments and asked what is the proper procedure for requesting and receiving lump sum payments for accrued annual leave.

According to Norita, the payouts made were a matter of timing and are authorized and legal, This was her response to questions about it during a Senate Committee Fiscal Affairs budget hearing last Friday.

"These employees in question were being paid out of the mayor's 603 funding, so that's why the funding was available. If it was any other source, it would not be available and thus not paid out," Norita clarified.

The process for the payments went through verification, accountability, and due diligence. It was just a matter of timing in the issuance of those payments, as it happened to be in the term of the new mayor. However, those payments were authorized and verified, she said.

"We verify whether the payment is authorized by the expenditure authority, which it was; whether it was allowable, which it was, as confirmed by [Attorney General Edward Manibusan]; and whether the funding was available, which it was," said Norita.

It then went through for completion. As for its allowability, that was why these payments were held back at the direction of the director of Finance' financial services, said Norita.

"In doing her due diligence, she held back those payments, and in holding them back, we had to get AG's opinion on the applicability of those regulations that we normally apply to everybody else. The opinion that came back was that municipal employees are separate from state employees, and that the payment was allowable," Norita said.

Finance did hold back those payments, but with the AG already verifying their allowability, the DOF then released those payments as it went through the normal process of verification and accountability, she said.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

US

From page 1

of H.R. 2670, or the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2024, the bill now heads to the Senate for consideration, according to Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP).

In his e-kilili newsletter over the weekend, Sablan said the annual defense bill authorizes $886.3 billion to support service members and bolster the U.S. military. The bill includes several provisions specifically beneficial to the CNMI.

Off the $78 million appropriated for the Tinian Airport Divert Project, $26 million will be for airfield development phase 1, $20 million for fuel tanks with pipeline and hydrant, and $32 million for a parking apron, Sablan said.

He said the bill also has a report language directing the U.S. Department of Defense to ensure that students applying to the service academies can receive required medical examinations in the Marianas.

Additional provisions include a 5.2% pay raise for service members, expanded basic needs allowance to assist low-income service members supporting a family, and reduced childcare fees for military families.

The delegate said other provision is the continuation of the Pacific Deterrence Initiative to deter conflict in the Indo-Pacific region.

SUGARKING

From page 1

after winning the hearts and ears of the judges and the audience through the performance of their original song aptly titled Resiliency Rising.

The Sugarking Band, composed of Donovan Castro, Edward Diaz Jr., Herbert J. Sablan, Eric B. Atalig and Albert Leon Guerrero, won both the Battle of the Bands grand prize and Champion title as well as the first ever Battle of the Band's People's Choice Award over the weekend at the Garapan Fishing Base in Kristo Rai.

The event, which drew hundreds of eager supporters and music lovers alike, saw four bands perform their original songs based on the "Resiliency Rising" theme.

The band expressed gratitude for the win and said that they hope to inspire others to start getting into music. "I'm very thankful for this competition. Thank you to the mayor's office and the committee. I really hope that this competition can inspire…other kids [and] everybody else to come out of the woodwork and…start the music…" said Diaz "I think we have a lot of talent here. I really feel like music is so neglected and the reason we are together here is because we love our hobby, we have a passion for the music."

Along with the People's Choice Award, which gave them $100 in prize money, the band also earned the 2023 Battle of the Bands' Champion title, $750 cash, $100 worth of gift certificates, as well as Resiliency Rising jerseys.

The competition judges were musicians JJ Conception, entertainer Big Mama, and sponsor Perry Inos.

Other bands performing alongside Sugarking were the Legends, Da Kine, and Joshua "Zengzung" Castro. Each band was judged based on lyrics, song melody, stage presence, crowd response, and how well the 'Resiliency Rising theme was incorporated to the song.

In an post-event interview with Castro, who is the Sugarking lead vocalist and ukulele player for the night, and Diaz, who is the background vocalist and lead guitarist, both said they hope to release more original music in the coming days.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

OGM'S

From page 3

understand where the CNMI is in terms of how much federal funds have been received.

Cabrera disclosed that on average the CNMI government receives between $3.2 million and $3.6 million in indirect cost collections.

However, when COVID-19 occurred, that situation caused a slowdown in growth because government employees were not able to come to work and spend the money, Cabrera said. He pointed out that indirect cost only works when the grant is being spent.

"If the grant is not expended, we don't collect. There is a misconception that indirect cost is you get a grant and right then and there you take it. No," the administrator said.

He said they don't collect indirect costs on benefits like food stamps, or giving free food, any health benefits or childcare.

Cabrera said last year, the indirect costs collection was $2,026,341.

Deployable kitchen feeds service members during CNMI mission

By LT. COL. KRISTIN PORTER
807th Medical Command (Deployment Support)

On Day 1 of health and veterinary services at the Innovative Readiness Training Operation Wellness CNMI mission on Saipan, service members were surprised with a lunchtime delivery from local business Triple J Saipan.

"In the spirit of gratitude, we extend our hospitality to our service members who have traveled far to fulfill their duty to our country and to our islands. We hope these meals replenish their strength, comfort their souls, and express our deepest appreciation for their selfless service," said Triple J senior vice president Robert Daniel Murrell.

Breakfast and dinner for service members on Saipan were to be provided via the Air Force's newly issued kitchen platform, the Expandable 3-in-1 Expeditionary Flex Kitchen, or E-SPEK, leaving Meals-Ready-to-Eat for lunch.

The E-SPEK, coming from the 254th Force Support Squadron, Guam Air National Guard, requires about 100 gallons of potable water to feed 350 service members at one meal. But unfortunately, due to a contract error for water services and the water delivery truck breaking down, the E-SPEK was not operational until Wednesday evening, leaving two days of MREs for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

Master Sgt. Dexter Diaz, the 254th FSS training and deployment manager who is serving as the IRT food operations and logistics NCO, explained that their unit is only the second unit in the Air Force to receive the E-SPEK out of production and shipped it via commercial cargo ship to Saipan to help with the life support mission.

Diaz and his team only received training on the kitchen platform about two weeks ago.

"The E-SPEK was actually recommended by [the National Guard Bureau] to come out here and partner…to provide the service…and see it in action," said Diaz.

"Because the E-SPEK is such a new platform, and the Air Force is all about training, we wanted to pull as many service members on this IRT as possible because the IRT is [focused on] training," said Maj. Amy Johnson, from the 176th Medical Group out of Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, who serves as the IRT's Air Force/Air National Guard officer in charge of life support services.

The 116th FSS from Robins Air Force Base, Ga., also sent eight airmen to augment the life support mission.

SPC. RONALD D. BELL

U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Giselle Reyes-Zivalza, 116th Food Support Squadron, serve service members dinner at Innovative Readiness Training Operation Wellness CNMI on Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, on July 11, 2023.

"Our unit only has the SPEK and DRMKT [Disaster Relief Mobile Kitchen Trailer]… having this training as early as it is. …We got a heads-up on a lot of other units that don't have it," stated Master Sgt. Daniel McMahon, services superintendent for the 116th FSS and IRT services NCOIC.

The Air National Guard is slowly phasing out some of their other kitchens and rolling out the E-SPEK by region at the cost of close to $500,00 per platform beginning in fiscal year 2023.

"It's a mobile kitchen…that can be airlifted by helicopter, by plane or shipped by boat," said Diaz, emphasizing its expeditionary capabilities and versatility versus the Mobile Kitchen Trailer.

Requiring only a minimum of four airmen to operate and maximum of six, Diaz's team of five and McMahon's team of eight work rotating shifts in the E-SPEK and have even been able to provide hot meals at lunch for service members in addition to breakfast and dinner.

"We wanted to do fresh rations but due to the limited restrictions on the amount of supplies DLA [Defense Logistics Agency] can supply locally, we had to go to UGRs [Utilized Group Rations] and MREs. But in the training aspect, when we have time, we would like to utilize the full spectrum of the unit to bake, cook rice, make stews…so the individuals can learn the difference between how it is in a regular facility kitchen and how it is to cook outside," said Diaz.

Faith, Hope and KARIDAT
Catholic Charities - Diocese of Chalan Kanoa

A Northern Mariana Islands Social Service
JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

(1) FULL-TIME SHELTER WORKER

Interested applicant can email info@karidat.org to receive a position description and a fillable application form.

DOCUMENTS REQUIRED: A complete application form, copy of diploma/degree, resume/bio-data; current police clearance within 6 months and a copy of a valid CNMI Driver's license.

NO PHONE INQUIRIES PLEASE.
CLOSING DATE: FRIDAY, JULY 28, 2023 AT 4:00 PM.

Department of Veterans Affairs
PACT Act Claims Clinic
Hosted by
Honolulu Veterans Affairs Regional Office
July 20, 2023
12pm to 5pm

VA Benefits Counselors will be available to answer non-medical benefits questions and assist with the claim process. Information regarding the PACT Act that expands VA benefits for Veterans exposed to burn pits, Agent Orange, and other toxic substances will also be available.

WHERE: Hyatt Regency Saipan
Giovanni's Restaurant
873 Micro Beach Road Garapan
Saipan 96950

WHEN: July 20, 2023 – 12pm to 5pm

No registration is required

Walk-In Only. Customers Seen on a First Come - First Served Basis

For additional information related to the PACT Act visit VA.gov/PACT

For questions regarding the PACT Claims Clinic please contact
Willie Peterson, (670) 664-2650 or Aiko Shibuya at (808) 433-0501

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Program

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

OPENING DATE: June 21, 2023 CLOSING DATE: July 24, 2023 TIME: 4:00 P.M.

NMHC JVA NO.	Positions:	Salary:
2023-015	Chief Financial Officer (CFO)	$70,000.00 to $80,000.00 per annum (UNGRADED)

Employment application form, detailed job description, qualification requirements and other information may be accessed at the NMHC website at www.nmhcgov.net.

Applicants may submit their applications through the following options: Submission at the at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan; Drop Box located in front of the NMHC Central Office building; or email application and documents to officemanager@nmhcgov.net.

All applicants must complete and submit the NMHC Employment Application Form together with required documents that are listed in the Employment Application Package. Failure to provide the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. NMHC and all its properties are drug-free zones; therefore, selected applicant will be subject to pre-employment drug screening.

It is the policy of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) that the merit system will be applied and administered according to the principle of equal opportunity for all citizens and nationals as defined by its personnel regulations and the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Constitution regardless of age, race, sex, religion, political affiliation or belief, marital status, disability or place of origin.

For inquiries, please contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager, at (670) 234-6866/9447or by email to officemanager@nmhcgov.net . NMHC is a fair housing agency and an equal opportunity provider, lender and employer.

/s/
JESSE S. PALACIOS
Corporate Director

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Program

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

OPENING DATE: July 06, 2023 CLOSING DATE: July 21, 2023 TIME: 4:00 P.M.

NMHC JVA No.	Positions:	Salary
2023-013	1- Homeowner Assistance Fund (HAF) Program Administrative Specialist	$25,000.00 per annum-UNGRADED

Employment application form, detailed job description, qualification requirements and other information may be accessed at www.nmhcgov.net.

Applicants may submit their applications through the following options: Submission at the at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan; or at the Drop Box located in front of the NMHC Central Office building; or email application and documents to officemanager@nmhcgov.net.

All applicants must complete and submit the NMHC Employment Application Form together with required documents that are listed in the Employment Application Package. Failure to provide the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. NMHC and all its properties are drug-free zones; therefore, selected applicant will be subject to pre-employment drug screening.

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For inquiries, please contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager, at (670) 234-6866/9447or by email to officemanager@nmhcgov.net . NMHC is a fair housing agency and an equal opportunity provider, lender and employer.

/s/
JESSE S. PALACIOS
Corporate Director

Japanese male choir to perform at memorial sites

A male chorus group from Japan will arrive in the Marianas today, July 17, to conduct memorial performances at World War II memorial sites on Saipan and Tinian.

The visiting group is composed of 20 members of Roppongi Male Chorus ZIG-ZAG, which consists of well-known professionals in their fields like politicians, entrepreneurs, doctors, lawyers, artists, and others. They have performed in the Philippines, Palau, Marshall Islands, and other countries around the world, including at the world-famous Carnegie Hall in New York City, to honor the war dead of World War II.

"We're very pleased to welcome ZIG-ZAG to the Marianas for this poetic tribute to those who lost their lives [on] Saipan and Tinian during the war," said Marianas Visitors Authority managing director Christopher A. Concepcion. "Our islands are now a place of healing, peace, and rejuvenation, and these performances of honor reflect that. We are grateful for their visit."

The first performance will be this morning at 11am at the site of the Japanese-era Donne Field Hospital on Mt. Tapochau, depending on the weather. Additional performances will be held at 2pm at Jigokudani, also known as Hell Valley, followed by a third performance at the Central Pacific Veterans Monument at Last Command Post in Marpi at 3:30pm. A performance will also be held on Tinian tomorrow, July 18, tentatively beginning at 1:30pm at Banzai Cliff at Puntan Carolinas.

For more information about the group, visit https://rokudan-zz.com/en/, or contact Pau Pau Tours at info@paupautour.com, or call (670) 233-7282, or (670) 287-5102 for further details about the performances in the Marianas. ***(MVA)***

Xanthus Manglona brings pride to Rota

By CHRYSTAL MARINO
chrystal_marino@saipantribune.com
CORRESPONDENT

Another son of the CNMI brings pride to the Marianas, especially his hometown in Rota, after earning his commission as an Army officer last May 20, 2023, when he graduated from the University of Guam with a double major: a Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice and a Bachelor of Science in Public Administration degree with a minor in Military Science, both with magna cum laude honors.

Although Xanthus Jordan Hocog Manglona was born in Guam, he considers Rota his home since he was raised there, and even graduated with honors from Dr. Rita H. Inos Jr & Sr High School in 2019.

The son of Maj. Albert Manglona and Georgette Manglona, Xanthus Manglona Manglona moved to Guam and attended the University of Guam in his pursuit of higher education and was awarded numerous scholarships and grants, including the Army ROTC National Scholarship.

Part of Manglona's many accomplishments was his induction into the Alpha Phi Sigma Criminal Justice Honor Society in 2022, and his service as a member of the Public Administration and Legal Studies Society.

Manglona also volunteered with the Americorps "Ayuda Para i Kumunidat" Program for three years, where he worked with disadvantaged youth in an effort to help them become independent and productive citizens. He also offered his assistance and service to others during the COVID-19 pandemic recovery.

Manglona's latest accomplishment—earning his commission as an Army officer on May 20, 2023—came with well-deserved honors, and the magna cum laude title for both degrees. After completing his required military training, Manglona is currently preparing to take his Law School Assessment Test and plans to attend law school and be a practicing attorney in the CNMI and Guam.

With his great-grandfather a lawyer and judge during the Trust Territory era, Manglona would like to follow in his great-grandfather's footsteps.

He extends his gratitude to his parents and family members for their love, support and guidance in helping him during his educational endeavor and plans to return to the islands to serve his community.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Xanthus Jordan Hocog Manglona graduates from the University of Guam with a double major, both with magna cum laude honors.

Karidat closed until mid-August

Karidat Social Services will be closed starting July 17, 2023, until mid-August while it moves to a new location.

This means Karidat will be limiting its services to victim services only. There will be no food or rental assistance until the move is complete.

Call the Victim Hotline at (670) 234-5100 if you need assistance.

"We thank you for your patience and understanding while we are going through this transition and we look forward to continuing our services to the community, we will make the announcement regarding our new location once we have settled in," said a Karidat news release. ***(PR)***

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONS LICENSING BOARD
P.O. Box 502078, Bldg., 1242 Pohnpei Court
Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel No: (670) 664-4809 Fax: (670) 664-4814
Email: info@cnmilicensing.gov.mp • Website: www.cnmilicensing.gov.mp

Pursuant to P.L. 8-41, Section 11, Governor Arnold I. Palacios and Lt. Governor David M. Apatang, through the Health Care Professions Licensing Board (HCPLB) are hereby giving notice that it will hold its regular monthly board meeting on ***Thursday, July 20, 2023, at 8 a.m.*** on Saipan. The meeting will be held at the Board of Professional Licensing Conference Room, BPL Building on Capitol Hill.

AGENDA

I. Meeting Call to Order
II. Determination of Quorum
III. Review and Adoption of Agenda
IV. Review and Adoption of Minutes (05/18/2023)
V. Public Comments
VI. Chairperson's Report
- CNMI Operation Wellness Mission 2023

VII. Director's Report
- Notice and Certification for Adoption on Proposed Amendments to the Regulations for:
  1. Psychology
  2. Dentists
  3. Telehealth and Telemedicine
- Update with Proposed Regulations for Speech Pathology and Audiology
- Updates with the Law Revision Commission Regarding HCPLB Adopted Proposed Regulations
- Practice Monitoring Report on Case #20-0001

VIII. Investigator's Report
IX. Communications from the Governor's Office & Legislature
A. Governor's Office
B. Legislature
X. Old Business
XI. New Business
XII. Pending Applications for Board's Review
A. New Application
B. Renewal Application
XIII. Miscellaneous Business
XIV. Executive Session: The Board may vote to meet in executive session to consult with Counsel on pending or anticipated legal matters.
XV. Announcements
A. Next Meeting Date
B. Adjournment of Meeting

BLACK MICRO CORPORATION

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Black Micro Corporation is recruiting a Site Safety and Health Officer (SSHO) position for its Tinian projects who meet the following requirements:

- Must have at least five (5) years of continuous construction or general industry safety experience in supervising and managing general construction.
- Credentials as a Safety Trained Supervisor-Construction (STS-C) or Construction Health and Safety Technician (CHST), is a plus.
- Must have completed a 30 Hour OSHA Construction or General Industry or approved equivalent safety class within the last 5 years and a 40 Hour EM-385-1-1 class within the last 3 years.
- Must have completed an average of at least 24 hours of formal safety training in the following competencies: fall protection, scaffolding, trench/excavation, confined space, hazardous energy and health hazard recognition each year for the past 5 years.

Salary is negotiable.

Submit resume with certificates to:
BLACK MICRO CORPORATION
Saluda St., Lower Navy Hill
PMB 766, Box 10001 Saipan, MP 96950
Contact Person: Remi Sablan
(670) 322-4861 (office) • (670) 785-2598 (cell)
Email: remedios@blackguam.com

COSMETOLOGIST: K'S INTERNATIONAL CORPORATION. SAIPAN, CNMI

Keep work stations clean and sanitize tools, such as scissors and combs. Bleach, dye, or tint hair, using applicator or brush. Cut, trim and shape hair or hairpieces, based on customers' instructions, hair type and facial features, using clippers, scissors, trimmers and razors. Schedule client appointments. Update and maintain customer information records, such as beauty services provided. Demonstrate and sell hair care products and cosmetics. Analyze patrons' hair and other physical features to determine and recommend beauty treatment or suggest hair styles. Shampoo, rinse, condition, and dry hair and scalp or hairpieces with water, liquid soap, or other solutions. Order, display, and maintain supplies. Comb, brush, and spray hair or wigs to set style. Develop new styles and techniques. Apply water, setting, straightening or waving solutions to hair and use curlers, rollers, hot combs and curling irons to press and curl hair. Shape eyebrows and remove facial hair, using depilatory cream, tweezers, electrolysis or wax. Administer therapeutic medication and advise patron to seek medical treatment for chronic or contagious scalp conditions. Recommend and explain the use of cosmetics, lotions, and creams to soften and lubricate skin and enhance and restore natural appearance. Clean, shape, and polish fingernails and toenails, using files and nail polish. Give facials to patrons, using special compounds, such as lotions and creams. Train or supervise other hairstylists, hairdressers and assistants. Operate cash registersto receive payments from patrons.

Minimum Requirements: High School diploma and 12 months experience required.
Salary: $ 7.88 - $8.00 per hour.

Workplace: SAN JOSE VILLAGE Saipan, CNMI

To apply: Please send your resume to
K'S INTERNATIONAL CORPORATION., PO BOX
501981, Saipan, MP 96950 or e-mail to kssalon96950@gmail.com
Job Number – KS-2023-01

AIR CONDITION AND REFRIGERATION MECHANIC: COCA COLA BEVERAGE CO. (MICRONESIA) INC. SAIPAN, CNMI

Install and repair refrigerating systems, adjust or replace worn or defective mechanism and parts and reassembles repaired system. Troubleshoot post-mix machines, ice maker, freezer, chiller or clients & customers. Troubleshoot air condition system of the company office/building and company vehicles. Discuss and address system malfunctions with the supervisor, identify and recommend resolution. Prepares and submit company required job order report, parts order and keep good record of the same, conducts preventive maintenance of air conditioning and refrigeration systems, coolers, freezers and other mechanical equipment, including but not limited to inventory of parts and services needed. Repairs or troubleshoot electronic devices in the office and properties of company affiliates (e.g. microwave oven, signage, fire alarm, telephone lines, etc.). Perform other related duties and special projects as assigned.

Other requirements:
Associate Degree or Vocational course in Air conditioning and Refrigeration, 24 months experience in air-condition and refrigeration.

Salary: $ 9.70 - $13.11 per hour.

Workplace: CHALAN PALE ARNOLD CHALAN LAULAU Saipan, CNMI

To apply: Please send your resume to
COCA COLA BEVERAGE CO. (MICRONESIA) INC., PO BOX 500266, Saipan, MP 96950 or e-mail to spn_hr@subwaypacific.com
Job Number – COKE-2023-01

‘We’re very blessed to have these free services’

By CHRYSTAL MARINO
chrystal_marino@saipantribune.com
Correspondent

With pet care services in the CNMI limited to non-profit organizations that rely on volunteer veterinarians from off-island, many community members readily welcomed military veterinarians and their animal technicians who are on island right now for the U.S. Department of Defense’s Innovative Readiness Training Operation CNMI Wellness, which is providing no-cost medical and veterinary services.

Day 2 last Thursday saw many pet owners and their pets going to either at the Office of the Mayor’s Dog Control Center in Afetna or the Saipan Cares for Animals Facility in Gualo Rai. Both locations have had no shortage of cases, whether coming in for a spay and neuter procedure or for medical examinations. The two locations are open for these services from 8am until 5pm on a first-come, first-served basis. The Office of the Mayor’s Dog Control Center continues at its regular operation hours.

The IRT CNMI Wellness will be available until July 19 on Saipan and July 18 on Tinian and Rota.

Pet owners that were present at SCA were grateful for the service. Navy Hill resident Bennet Seman, who brought her dogs Marley and Coco, said this outreach is one that she and many others are very grateful for, especially in light of not having an island veterinarian “We care for our dogs, they are our family members,” she said

Another Navy Hill resident and pet owner, Margaret Castro, echoed the same sentiments “We’re very blessed to have these kinds of services, plus it’s free. …You can’t find that anywhere else so we are very fortunate to have this kind of service.”

Sebastian Muña, who brought in his German shepherd, Lowkey, said, “I would say that it’s much appreciated by everyone in the community, especially to say that it’s free, at no cost. Yeah, it’s a big help [with] them coming in and helping around, especially with all of the people that have been struggling ever since SCA closed down and how the Saipan Humane Society is trying to help as well.”

Master Sgt. Jennifer Bunch, who is the noncommissioned officer in charge of the Veterinary Services for IRT Operation CNMI Wellness, said that there has been a great community response so far.

She said two veterinarians and two animal technicians are at Saipan Mayor’s Office kennel, while there are three veterinarians and five animal technicians at the SCA site.

She said they are currently able to care for most needs except for vaccines, rabies treatment, and treatment for heartworms or cancer, and deworming.

“We were trying [to do vaccinations] [and] we submitted our request. [But] sometimes you submit and you ask for things and sometimes you don’t get what you asked for. It’s one of those things we asked for and, unfortunately it just did not come in, so we’re not able to provide that. … Everybody’s asking for it and I wish we had it. If the medication would’ve come in, we would’ve done it, same for the DHLPP, cat feline leukemia, as far as rabies as well, but it didn’t come in.”

She also mentioned that they don’t have the anti-flea and tick medicine Bravecto at the moment. “I’m trying to work with Saipan Humane Society because they have it. …Other than that, we’re trying to do like doxycycline and some other prescriptions that we can give them to help…”

She said they also can make recommendations for a particular shampoo or over-the-counter flea and tick medicine. “A lot of skin issues out here…is like flea allergies, so the biggest thing is trying to put them [pets] on a flea prevention as much as possible.”

Aside from vaccines, they could still provide a lot of services, such as taking care of burns, skin infections and rashes, emergencies, hydration, dental, getting a minor blood work, or a simple blood draw to find heartworms if there are any heartworms. “It’s not a full range of services but it’s pretty close.”

Bunch noted that, with two separate locations, the vet services at the Mayor’s Dog Control Office is focused on spay and neuter operations, and the Mayor’s Office would entertain six to eight animals a day. The other veterinarians and their vet technicians at SCA would be handling not only spay and neuter operations, but will also be taking in walk-in emergencies, and will offering medical check-ups for pets. Services are on a first-come, first- serve basis.

Without the IRT, limited veterinary services on Saipan are only at the volunteer-run non-profit organization Saipan Humane Society after the recent closure of Saipan Cares for Animals.

CHRYSTAL MARINO
Photos show scenes during Day 2 of the Innovative Readiness Training Operation CNMI Wellness veterinarian services at the Saipan Cares for Animals site.

DIVISION OF YOUTH SERVICES
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY & CULTURAL AFFAIRS
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR
12860 Atchu St. (House#1352), Capitol Hill
P.O. 501000 C.K., Saipan, MP 96950

PUBLIC HEARING ANNOUNCEMENT

This is to inform the general public that the Division of Youth Services under the auspices of the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs will be conducting its Public Hearings on the 2024 Social Services Consolidated Block Intended Use Plan (SSBG IUP) on the following:

ISLAND	DATE	TIME	VENUE
Tinian	July 20, 2023	5:00 p.m.	Tinian Youth Center
Rota	July 26, 2023	5:00 p.m.	Rota Mayor’s Office Conference Hall
Saipan	August 3, 2023	5:00 p.m.	Tanapag Youth Center

Electronic copy of the FY2024 SSBG Consolidated Block Grant Intended Use Plan may be viewed on the following sites:

DYS Website: www.dys.gov.mp
GOVERNOR’S Website: www.governor.gov.mp

For more information, or to retrieve a hard copy of the SSBS IUP, you may contact Kevin DLGuerrero or Ken Cruz at 670-237-1000/1/2 or via email at kdlguerrero@dys.gov.mp or kcruz@dys.gov.mp.

/s/ Vivian T. Sablan
DYS Administrator

/s/ Mary M.S. Sablan
DCCA Secretary

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB23-DPL/
TIN-42300082-CIF TINIAN

SUBMISSION DATE: AUGUST 11, 2023 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

“PURCHASE OF ONE (1) CLASS ‘E’ VEHICLE FOR TINIAN DISTRICT OFFICE”

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED ON THE MUNIS VENDOR SELF SERVICE PORTAL (https://selfservice.dof.gov.mp/vss/) OR AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT BLDG NO. 12552, ANATAHAN DRIVE, CAPTIOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS RFP CAN BE MADE TO THE DEPARMENT OF PUBLIC LANDS, MRS. TERESITA A. SANTOS VIA EMAIL AT dpl@dpl.gov.mp

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ TERESITA A. SANTOS
SECRETARY, DPL

/S/ BRIEN S. NICHOLAS JR.
ACTING DIRECTOR, PS

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
MAIN OFFICE: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2ND FLOOR ARRIVAL BLDG.
PO BOX 501055•SAIPAN•MP•96950
PHONE: (1-670) 237-6500/1 • FAX: (1-670) 234-5962
WEBSITE: WWW.CNMIPORTS.COM

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
FOR CYBERSECURITY ASSESSMENT, CYBER RESILIENCE PROGRAM AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
PROJECT NO. CPA-RFP-012-23

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (Authority) is inviting qualified cybersecurity consulting firms (Proposers) to provide a Cybersecurity Infrastructure Assessment Report (CIAR) and to develop a Cybersecurity Incident Response Plan (CIRP) and a task-based CIRP Implementation Plan.

The RFP Package is available beginning June 26, 2023, at the Authority’s Accounting Office, 2nd Floor, Departure Terminal Building, Saipan International Airport upon payment of an administrative fee of $50.00 payable to the “Commonwealth Ports Authority”. Payment shall be by cash, certified cashier’s check, postal money order, or credit card. All applicants shall pay the reasonable administrative fee of $50.00 to receive a copy of the proposal.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:

RFP Issued Date	June 26, 2023
Applicant Briefing at CPA Meeting Room	July 07, 2023 (10:30 A.M.)
Deadline to Submit Questions	July 14, 2023
Deadline to Submit Proposals	July 28, 2023 (4:00 PM)
Evaluation’s Committee’s Selection	August 4, 2023
Execution of Professional Services Agreement	August 11, 2023
Project Completion	September 15, 2023

Qualified proposers shall submit their proposals sealed and marked on the cover package outside as follows: “Proposal for Cybersecurity Assessment, Cyber Resilience Program, and Implementation Plan, Project No. CPA-RFP-012-23”. Proposals must be submitted no later than **4:00 p.m. Local Time, July 28, 2023,** to the Office of the Executive Director at the Saipan International Airport. Proposals submitted by facsimile (fax) transmission will not be considered. Any proposals received after the proposal submittal deadline shall be returned to the proposer unopened.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) reserves the right to reject any or all proposals submitted if sufficient justification exist that awarding the project would not be in the best interest of the CPA.

FOR THE COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY.

CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

Date

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XXXIII, Issue No. 140

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Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950

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MEMBER

The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Rooting out fraud of federal COVID-19 relief funds

Three years after the deadly pandemic brought the United States to a screeching halt—shutting down businesses, industries, government offices, schools and much of daily life as we had known it—memories of how terrible those days were have begun to fade a little.

Before politicians and the general public become too outraged over reports of the staggering amount of fraud in federal COVID-19 relief programs, we should remember the enormous need in those dark months when businesses were in danger of closing for good and people thrown out of work were scrambling to take care of themselves and their families.

Yes, recent reports that billions of dollars of federal COVID-19 funds were stolen or misspent are shocking and appalling. A recent report from The Associated Press says that fraudsters may have stolen more than $280 billion in COVID relief aid, while as much as another $123 billion was wasted or used wrongly.

Those losses together come to about 10% of the $4.2 trillion in COVID relief aid the federal government doled out. There's about another trillion dollars in aid yet to be paid.

Sadly, it's not surprising that some people would take advantage of a devastating pandemic that killed more than 1.13 million Americans, put enormous pressure on hospitals and medical workers, and stressed our economy almost to the breaking point. Some were hardened criminals and gangsters. Others just saw an opportunity and thought it was OK to game the system.

Unscrupulous crooks used the Social Security numbers of dead people and federal prisoners to get unemployment checks. Fraudsters collected benefits in more than one state. People whose business ventures and finances were in good shape got money intended to keep struggling mom-and-pop shops from folding.

In Washington, more investigations are under way, and politicians are arguing about what went wrong and who's to blame.

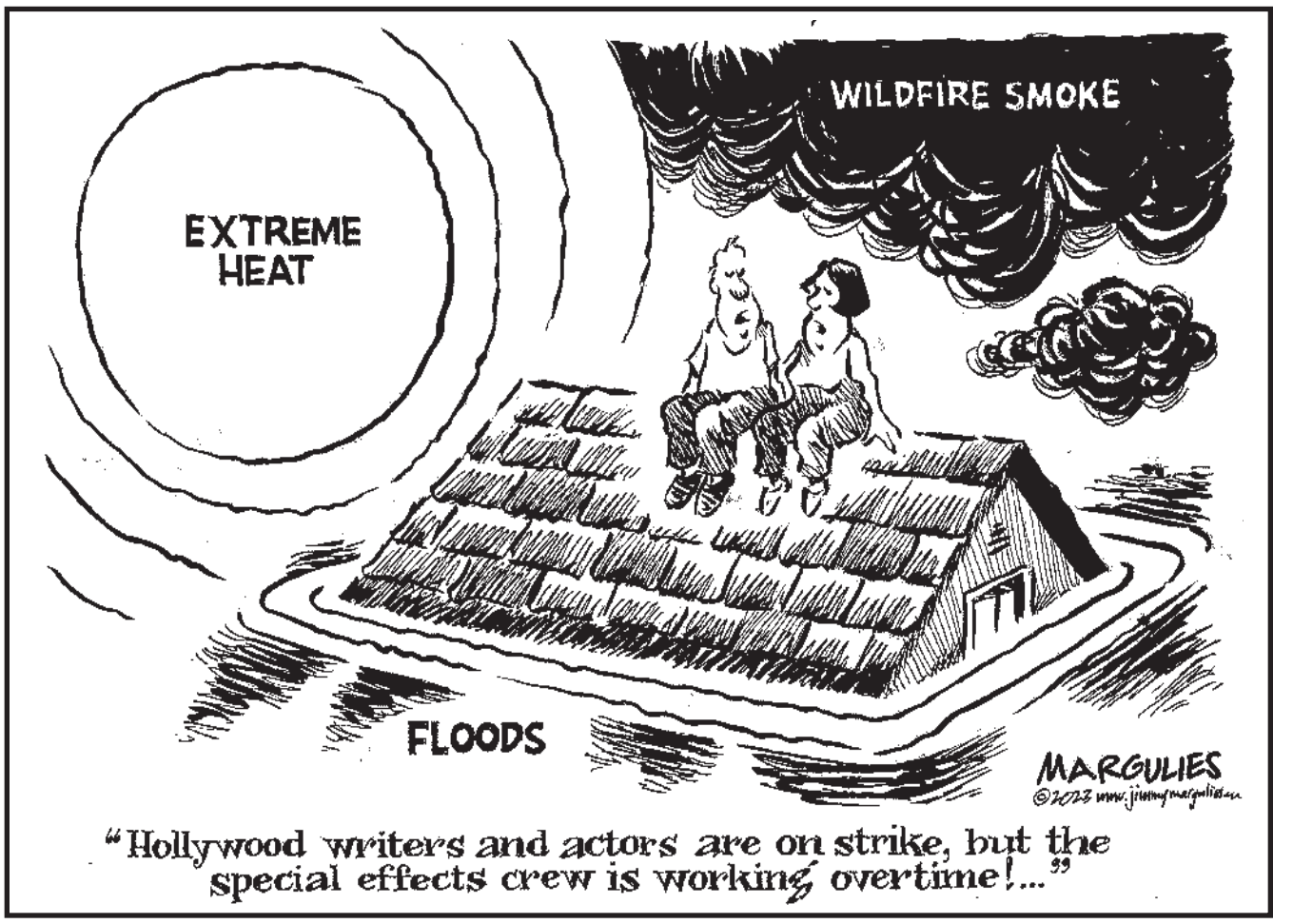
Investigations and accountability are vitally important. Already, the government has charged more than 2,230 defendants with crimes related to pandemic fraud. Every effort should be made to punish people who profited from the pandemic and to recover fraudulently obtained money. The continuing investigations, criminal charges, convictions and recovered monies should get as much attention as the shocking scope of the fraud.

It's also important to learn the right lessons from what happened.

Some mistakes were inevitable. This $5.3 trillion federal rescue package was unprecedented in size, and the necessary haste made things tougher. The agencies responsible for distributing funds, including the Small Business Administration, the Internal Revenue Service and state unemployment agencies, were unprepared and understaffed.

The situation was likely made worse by the Trump administration's early attempts in 2020 to downplay the pandemic

See ROOTING on Page 9



Here's what's so frightening about the Supreme Court's latest power trip

By JACKIE CALMES
Los Angeles Times

A 6-3 conservative supermajority has really put the "supreme" in "Supreme Court," and not in a good way.

The court's major rulings in the term that just ended continued to defy precedents and expand its power versus the president and Congress. All the while, reports of justices' ethical transgressions mounted, and Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. gave the back of his hand to calls for reform, claiming against all evidence that the justices can police themselves.

The worrisome result for our democracy is a court with more power and less legitimacy. The public's opinion of the justices remains at an all-time low, with less than a third of American voters having positive views of the Supreme Court, according to a recent NBC News poll.

The justices have dashed off for their summer breaks with their families or perhaps their favorite right-wing billionaires — who knows which given Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito's failures to disclose such junkets? — but the court will remain in the headlines. Next Thursday, the Democratic-controlled Senate Judiciary Committee plans to vote on Supreme Court reforms that have gained support with the justices' inadvertent help. The legislation would require the court to spell out a code of conduct, create a lower court to review ethics complaints against the justices and tighten federal laws governing their financial disclosures and recusals from cases presenting conflicts of interest.

The bill would not heed progressives' calls to expand the court to dilute conservatives' sway — a bad idea that would only further politicize the institution (as President Joe Biden argues). Nor does the bill include term limits for justices — a much better idea, especially given Republican presidents' practice of choosing relatively young nominees who can stay on the bench for decades, though it could require amending the Constitution.

"Since the Court won't act, Congress will," Sens. Richard Durbin of Illinois, the Judiciary Committee chair, and Sheldon Whitehouse of Rhode Island said in a joint statement.

Tough talk, but the measure won't become law. Republicans will see to that by either filibuster in the Senate or burial in the GOP-controlled House.

Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky slammed Democrats for "trying to tell a coequal branch of government how to manage its internal operations, ostensibly to clean up its 'ethics.'" He didn't mention the scandals. He also defended the court's recent decisions, which of course he would: Its rulings, especially those against federal clean air and water regulations, are just what the coal state senator had in mind when he abused the Senate's confirmation power to create the conservative supermajority.

Despite the political gridlock, this debate will keep the question of the court's ethics and jurisprudence alive. And that's a good thing.

"This is not a normal court," Biden said recently. It has, he added later, "done more to unravel basic rights and basic decisions than any court in recent history."

Fact check: True.

Following last year's landmark rulings overturning precedents on abortion, gun rights and separation of church and state, the conservatives' latest decisions further undermined federal agencies' power, gutting wetland protections and reversing college debt relief for millions of Americans. Ominously, by taking cases on Biden's college debt program and a web designer's bid to refuse service to same-sex couples, the court threw open its doors to other plaintiffs of dubious legal standing who happen to share the conservatives' agenda.

After decades of decrying judicial activism, Republicans are celebrating a Supreme Court that has taken activism to a whole new level. And what makes the court's power grabs and lack of ethical accountability all the more objectionable is that the justices, unlike the major players in our other branches of government, are unelected and life-tenured. Their decisions can't be appealed, legally or politically.

As Justice Elena Kagan wrote in the liberals' dissent from Roberts' college debt opinion: "At the behest of a party that has suffered no injury, the majority decides a contested public policy issue properly belonging to the politically accountable branches and the people they represent." She called that "a danger to a democratic order."

To which the prickly Roberts harrumphed: "It has become a disturbing feature of some recent opinions to criticize the decisions with which they disagree as going beyond the proper role of the judiciary."

The most arrogant act of the term, however, wasn't a ruling; it was Roberts' dismissive rejection of Durbin's invitation to testify about court ethics and reforms. No separation-of-powers concern or precedent prevented Roberts from coming down from his bench to provide some much-needed transparency, humility and responsiveness to a troubled public.

But Roberts instead sent a predictably dismissive reply: "I must respectfully decline your invitation."

In other words, he reigns supreme.

EDITORIAL POLICY

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NATO shouldn't give Vladimir Putin an excuse to prolong the war

By ELIZABETH SHACKELFORD
Chicago Tribune

Elizabeth Shackelford is a senior fellow on U.S. foreign policy with the Chicago Council on Global Affairs. She was previously a U.S. diplomat and is the author of The Dissent Channel: American Diplomacy in a Dishonest Age.

When NATO leaders met this week in the capital of Lithuania, Russia's war in Ukraine loomed large. With Sweden's membership all but settled, Ukraine's future with the alliance was the biggest question on everyone's mind.

Ukraine wants an invitation to join. NATO leaders had been split on whether to offer one. They ultimately agreed that they would "extend an invitation to Ukraine to join the alliance" but without specifying when or how, per a summit communiqué.

The debate over Ukraine's potential NATO membership centers on whether it would deter Russia from invading Ukraine again or would instead provoke Russia and drag the entire alliance into war. The bigger question for NATO members should be whether the risk of the latter is worth the benefit to NATO.

I believe that question can only be answered with any certainty once the war is done. An offer of membership won't hasten that conclusion, so the question of Ukraine's membership is premature, serving neither the interests of NATO nor peace.

Even Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy understands that NATO cannot admit Ukraine while the war is raging. That would automatically put NATO in direct conflict with Russia. Despite a strong commitment to Ukraine's security, backed by billions of dollars in military assistance, the United States and other allies have made clear they have no interest in starting World War III by taking the fight directly to a nuclear-armed Russia.

NATO allies who strongly favor Ukraine's ultimate accession, particularly those that border Russia, such as Poland, want NATO to provide a specific and accelerated timetable for Ukraine to join once the war is concluded. They believe that a clear path for bringing Ukraine into the alliance is the best way to prevent future Russian aggression, against Ukraine or NATO countries directly.

Others disagree. The U.S. is the most vocal but not the only NATO country that views such assurances as unnecessary provocations to Russia. Germany has also been reluctant to make that commitment. These allies advocate a strong show of support to Ukraine, including more material commitments, but ensuring that NATO is not dragged into the war remains the top priority. For them, committing to a specific timeline for Ukraine's future membership would provide little real benefit to outweigh the risk of further goading Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Such a commitment would be largely symbolic. It would not change Ukraine's status today, nor would it change NATO's already robust provision of assistance.

The biggest benefit to Ukraine's cause, and NATO's corresponding interest, would be a boost of confidence to the Ukrainian government, military and people, who could likely use some good news as the long-awaited counteroffensive grinds on in fits and starts.

This is not an inconsequential factor. Morale has played a strong role in helping Ukraine's far smaller military outplay the Kremlin's at various points in this war. War fatigue could multiply Kyiv's challenges. The cost of that morale boost, though, would be a strong disincentive for Putin to accept an end to the war. The failed mutiny in June revealed that Putin's grip on Russia, which once looked firm, could be slipping. But the impending threat of Ukraine joining NATO could be the rallying cry Putin needs to solidify support for this war in the Russian public and political class.

Seven in 10 Russians said that NATO membership for Ukraine would threaten Russia, and preventing it is a top benefit of Russia's military action in Ukraine, according to a new survey by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs and the Levada Center in Moscow, one of Russia's last remaining independent polling firms. If ending the war means Ukraine joins NATO, a lot of Russians might feel differently about their commitment to the fight.

The debate within NATO is reminiscent of a similar one at NATO's summit 15 years ago, when the United States wanted to offer both Ukraine and Georgia action plans for membership, while Germany thought it would be unnecessarily confrontational. With no uniform position, Ukraine and Georgia got the worst of both worlds: enough to provoke Russia but no added protection. Russia invaded Georgia within months and Ukraine a few years later.

Reasonable people can draw opposite conclusions from this outcome. Proponents of Ukraine's membership say that a path to NATO membership then would have prevented any Russian aggression. Opponents argue that it was the promise of future membership that pushed Russia over the edge.

Unlike in 2008, however, Russia is already at war with Ukraine today, dug in across significant portions of Ukrainian territory. Ending war, not preventing it, is the immediate focus.

While I do not buy the "NATO made Putin do it" argument, I do believe a promise to admit Ukraine after the war ends would be an obstacle to Russia accepting peace and that NATO allies today can't know if Ukraine's membership will be a benefit or burden when that peace finally comes.

It might be unsatisfying to Ukraine today to leave Vilnius with no clear path, but it's the best decision for the possibility of peace and the interests of NATO's existing members in

What can make a difference between life and death during a heat wave

By DEREK LEMOINE, JEFF SHRADER, and LAURA BAKKENSEN
LOS ANGELES TIMES

Weather forecasts have gotten quite good over the years, but their temperatures aren't always spot on—and the result when they underplay extremes can be lethal. Even a 1-degree difference in a forecast's accuracy can be the difference between life and death, our research shows.

As economists, we have studied how people use forecasts to manage weather risks. In a new working paper for the National Bureau of Economic Research, we looked at how human survival depends on the accuracy of temperature forecasts, particularly during heat waves like large parts of the U.S. have been experiencing in recent days.

We found that when the weather forecasts underplayed the risk, even small forecast errors led to more deaths.

Our results also show that making forecasts 50% more accurate would save 2,200 lives per year across the country and would have a net value that's nearly twice the annual budget of the National Weather Service.

In the U.S. alone, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration issues 1.5 million forecasts per year. We examined data on each day's deaths, weather and National Weather Service forecast in every U.S. county from 2005 to 2017 to analyze the impact of those forecasts on human survival.

We then compared deaths in each county over the week following a day with accurate forecasts to deaths in the same county over the week following a day with inaccurate forecasts but the same weather. Because weather conditions were the same, any differences in mortality could be attributed to how people's reactions to forecasts affected their chance of dying in that weather.

We found similar results when the forecast was wrong on hot days with temperatures above 86 degrees Fahrenheit and on cold days with temperatures below freezing. Summer days that were hotter than forecast and winter days that were colder than predicted had more deaths. Yet forecasts that overestimated the summer heat or winter cold had little impact.

The fact is, people do pay attention to weather forecasts and adjust their activities in response to them. We found that on days when the forecast called for temperatures to be milder than they turned out to be—either cooler on a hot day or warmer on a cold day—people spent more time on leisure and less in home or work settings.

Electricity use also varies in sync with forecasts, suggesting that people's use of air conditioning does not just respond to the weather outside but also on how they planned for the weather outside.

However, weather forecasts are not used equally across society. Deaths among racial minorities are less sensitive to forecast errors, we found. That could be due in part to having less flexibility to act on forecasts, or not having access to them.

It's clear that people use weather forecasts to make decisions that can matter for life and death—when to go hiking, for example, or whether to encourage an elderly neighbor to go to a cooling center.

So, what is the value of accurate weather forecasts?

We used federal cost-benefit estimates of how people value improvements in their chances of survival to estimate their willingness to pay for better forecasts.

The result shows that 50% more accurate forecasts are worth at least $2.1 billion per year based on the mortality benefits alone. In comparison, the 2022 budget of the National Weather Service was less than $1.3 billion.

Weather forecasts have gotten steadily better over the past decades. About 68% of the next-day temperature forecasts now have an error of less than 1.8 degrees. Our results suggest investing in improved forecast accuracy would be worth the cost. Past improvements have come from better models, observations and computers. Future improvements could come from similar channels and from applying recent innovations in machine learning and artificial intelligence to weather prediction and communication.

Our weather is getting weirder, but weird weather can do less harm when we can see it coming.

Derek Lemoine is a professor of economics in the Eller College of Management at the University of Arizona. Jeff Shrader is an assistant professor at the School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University. Laura Bakkensen is an associate professor of economics and policy at the University of Arizona.

ROOTING

From page 8

and then to put the burden of dealing with it on the states. When the situation became dire, the administration hastily set up three large pandemic-relief programs and began pumping money out.

Critics now say that haste was a mistake and that more should have been done to make certain that money reached its intended recipients. Probably some greater care could have been taken; when the Biden administration took over, it began using the Treasury Department's "Do Not Pay" database of problematic contractors and individuals to weed out fraud, a process that critics say takes only a few days.

But overall, the urgency was justified. In such a dire emergency, it was more important to get help to people and businesses who desperately needed it than to make applicants plod through miles of red tape to prove their worthiness. Remember, back then, many frantic people were bemoaning how long it took to get help.

The biggest danger is that as we are disgusted by the enormity of the fraud and waste, we will lose sight of how urgent the need was and how the aid programs shored up the economy and saved desperate people. If wary Americans refuse to step up with relief programs when some future emergency demands them, that would be the greatest damage the thieves and fraudsters have done.

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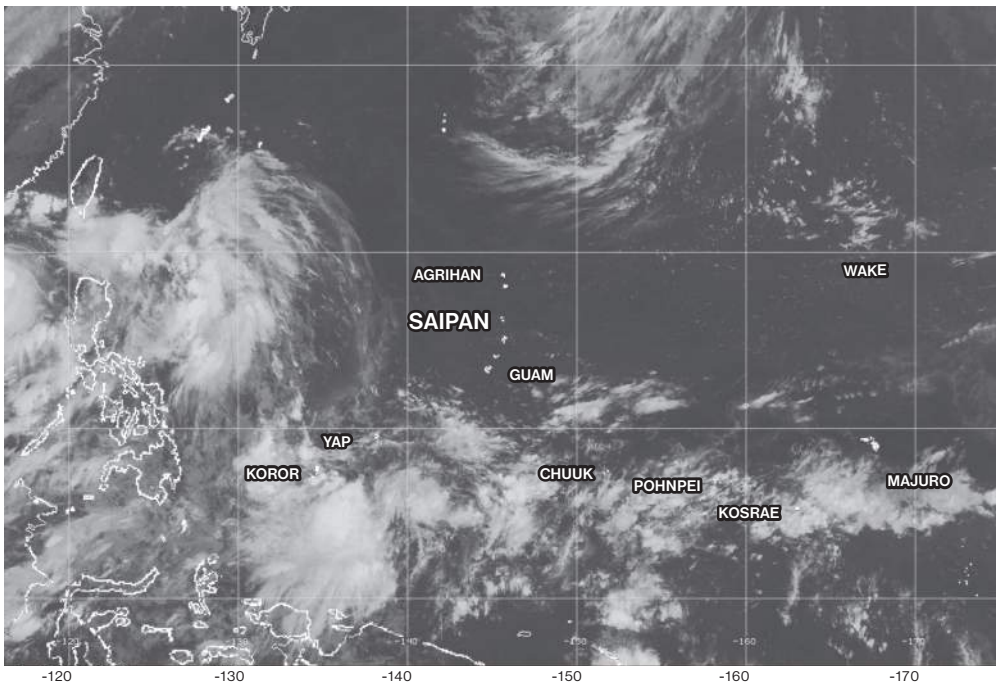
The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Scattered showers. Partly sunny	Isolated showers. Mostly sunny	Mostly sunny	A chance of showers. Partly sunny	A chance of showers. Partly sunny
88° 78°	88° 78°	88° 78°	88° 78°	88° 78°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 9:17 AM, SUNDAY, JULY 16, 2023

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Moderate trades prevail in the Marianas. Satellite imagery and Doppler radar indicate some minor open cells moving across the waters. Ipan buoy shows seas are about 5 feet.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA	▲ ▼ °F	
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	87° / 79°
Palau	Thunderstorms	81° / 77°
Yap	Thunderstorms	85° / 79°
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	86° / 79°
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	86° / 77°
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	86° / 77°
Majuro	Thunderstorms	86° / 80°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	5:55 AM	6:51 PM
Tuesday	5:55 AM	6:50 PM
Wednesday	5:55 AM	6:50 PM
Thursday	5:56 AM	6:50 PM
Friday	5:56 AM	6:50 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	5:06 AM	6:38 PM	-
Tuesday	6:00 AM	7:24 PM	-
Wednesday	6:52 AM	8:07 PM	-
Thursday	7:43 AM	8:46 PM	-
Friday	8:32 AM	9:21 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE	▲ ▼ °F	
Auckland	Showers	61° / 48°
Beijing	Sunny	98° / 74°
Hong Kong	Thunderstorms	85° / 83°
Honolulu	Mostly Sunny	88° / 76°
London	Showers	79° / 61°
Los Angeles	Sunny	82° / 67°
Manila	Thunderstorms	86° / 81°
Melbourne	Showers	55° / 45°
Miami	Thunderstorms	87° / 80°
New York	Showers	86° / 75°
Osaka	Showers	84° / 72°
Paris	Partly Cloudy	82° / 61°
Busan	Rain	75° / 70°
Rome	Mostly Sunny	88° / 66°
Salem	Thunderstorms	89° / 73°
San Francisco	Mostly Sunny	65° / 54°
Seoul	Mostly Sunny	84° / 68°
Tokyo	Rain	72° / 66°
Washington, DC	Thunderstorms	88° / 74°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY	FEET	
1:41 AM	Low Tide	1.36
6:00 AM	High Tide	1.81
1:50 PM	Low Tide	-0.38
9:17 PM	High Tide	1.81

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JULY 1, 2023

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	9:50AM	10:30AM	Daily
UA156	7:10PM	7:55PM	1, 4

SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)

UA824	7:25AM	9:55AM	1, 3, 5

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	Daily
UA193	6:55PM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Palau
UA183	7:15PM	9:10PM	Daily

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ626/703	4:20AM	10:35PM	1, 4, 5, 7 via ICN
UA117/183	9:50AM	9:10PM	Daily via Guam
UA117/193	9:50AM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

7C3467	3:00AM	7:10AM	Daily up to July 20
TW308	3:15AM	7:00AM	Daily
OZ626	4:20AM	7:55AM	Daily
7C3403	4:45AM	8:35AM	Daily
TW9308	4:45AM	8:45AM	1, 5 July 17 to Aug 18
7C3405	4:10PM	7:45PM	Daily

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	8:00AM	8:50AM	Daily
UA112	5:15PM	6:05PM	1, 4

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

UA825	9:25PM	1:50AM+1	2, 4, 7

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	10:25PM	4:25AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA189	10:25PM	6:10AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
PR110	10:30PM	4:25AM+1	Daily
UA192	11:50PM	5:35AM+1	2, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/174 via Guam	10:25PM	8:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6,7
UA192/174	10:25PM	8:45AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
UA184/174	11:50PM	8:45AM+1	2, 5 via Guam

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3406	9:30AM	3:10PM	Daily
7C3468	8:20PM	1:50AM+1	Daily up to July 19
TW307	8:30PM	2:15AM+1	Daily
OZ625	9:25PM	2:55AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7
TW9307	10:00PM	3:45AM+1	6, 4 July 23 to Aug 20
7C3405	10:10PM	3:40AM+1	Daily

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JUNE 1, 2022

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30	9:00	Daily
1302	11:00	11:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
1302	12:00	12:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
1303	15:30	16:00	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

LIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	12:00	12:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	13:00	13:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
3102	14:00	14:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
3103	16:30	17:00	Daily

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily

Business

United debuts wireless charging onboard

CHICAGO—United introduced a new domestic first class seat that includes a wireless charging station in every arm rest.

The new United First seat—which also features vegan leather upholstery, 13-inch seatback screens and 18-inch tray tables, Bluetooth connectivity, privacy screens and an ergonomist-designed cushion—debuts on its first 737 this month, and customers will continue to see it roll-out this summer. The airline expects the new seat to be on 200 domestic planes by 2026, including 737 NGs, A321neos and 737 MAXs.

"This new United First seat is designed around the modern traveler – more charging options, bigger spaces for devices, food, drinks and personal items and extra privacy," said Mark Muren, United managing director of Identity, Product and Loyalty. "As we evolve the onboard experience, we're upending old industry norms and anticipating future needs to accommodate the new ways people live and travel."

In each United First new seat, customers can enjoy the following features:

UNITED

United First seat debuted on its first 737 this month and customers will continue to see it rollout this summer.

Charge multiple devices at once

Passengers can quickly charge their multiple electronic devices at once with three types of charging docks in each seat – wireless, AC household-style outlet and USB-C. The wireless charger is located in a compartment of the armrest to give the passenger line-of-sight to notifications and free their hands and tray table.

Larger, user-friendly seatback entertainment

A growing number of customers prefer a two-screen experience where they use a personal device and a seatback screen simultaneously, so United is upleveling the experience. The 13-inch, high-definition screens are Bluetooth capable and include a remote for those unable to reach the touch screen.

More Space for Work and Relaxation

Designated space for devices, food, drinks and more make it easier for passengers to enjoy the full experience. A larger, 18 x 8.5 inch tray table features a built-in tablet holder and enough space for most standard laptops. With authentic Italian quartzite cocktail tables and bottle holders between each seat, passengers don't have to balance gadgets, drinks and snacks on one tray table.

More private, adjustable seat

In the large seats upholstered with vegan leather, passengers will experience more privacy with a 11 x 19-inch divider between neighbors, winged headrests and tray tables that deploy from outer armrests to reduce passenger contact. The seat features a 5-inch recline range, adjustable aisle arm rest that lowers completely and an ergonomist-designed seat cushion that sits 1-inch lower to accommodate a wider variety of heights

In addition to installing the new seats, United will update existing domestic first class seats on more than 200 planes by 2025. United First seats on select 737, A319 and A320 aircraft will be redesigned with new seat cushions, vegan leather upholstery and winged headrests.

The announcement marks United's first update to domestic first class seat design since 2015. The new United First seat was built with a team of experts, including United's engineering and inflight teams, University of Michigan biomechanics researcher Dr. Matthew Reed and design firm Priestman Goode.

For more information visit www.United.com and view media assets here. ***(PR)***

Microsoft moves closer to completing $69B Activision takeover

By MATT O'BRIEN
ASSOCIATED PRESS

A U.S. appeals court on Friday rejected a bid by federal regulators to block Microsoft from closing its $68.7 billion deal to buy video game maker Activision Blizzard, paving the way for the completion of the biggest acquisition in tech history after a legal battle over whether it will undermine competition.

In a brief ruling, a three-judge panel on the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals concluded there were no grounds for issuing an order that would have prevented Microsoft from completing its nearly 18-month-old deal to take over the maker of popular video games such as Call of Duty.

The Redmond, Washington, software maker is facing a potential $3 billion termination fee if the deal isn't completed by Tuesday.

"This brings us another step closer to the finish line in this marathon of global regulatory reviews," Microsoft President Brad Smith said in a statement.

The appeal filed by the U.S. Federal Trade Commission was a last-ditch effort from antitrust enforcers to halt the merger after another federal judge earlier this week ruled against the agency's attempt to block it. The FTC was seeking an injunction to prevent Microsoft from moving to close the deal as early as this weekend.

The FTC declined to comment on the ruling.

U.S. District Judge Jacqueline Scott Corley's earlier ruling, published Tuesday, said the FTC hadn't shown that the deal would cause substantial harm. She focused, in part, on Microsoft's promises and economic incentive to keep Call of Duty available on rivals to its own Xbox gaming system, such as Sony's PlayStation and Nintendo's Switch.

In its appeal, the FTC argued Corley made "fundamental errors."

"This case is about more than a single video game and the console hardware to play it," the FTC said. "It is about the future of the gaming industry. At stake is how future gamers will play and whether the emerging subscription and cloud markets will calcify into concentrated, walled gardens or evolve into open, competitive landscapes."

The case has been a difficult test for the FTC's stepped-up scrutiny of the tech industry's business practices under its chairperson, Lina Khan, appointed in 2021 by President Joe Biden. Standing legal doctrine has favored mergers between companies that don't directly compete with one another.

Khan came under fire from Republicans at a hearing Thursday in the House of Representatives for the agency's enforcement record, with one California lawmaker questioning whether the FTC was picking losing fights against mergers on purpose to pressure Congress to update its antitrust laws.

"Absolutely not," Khan replied, while acknowledging that "unfortunately, things don't always go our way."

The FTC's appeal said Corley, herself a Biden nominee, applied the wrong legal standard by effectively requiring its attorneys to prove their full case now rather than in a trial due to start in August before the FTC's in-house judge.

It was the FTC, however, that had asked Corley for an urgent hearing on its request to block Microsoft and Activision Blizzard from rushing to close the deal. The agency's argument was that if the deal closed now, it would be harder to reverse the merger if it was later found to violate antitrust laws.

In its response to the appeal, Microsoft countered that it could "readily divest" Activision Blizzard later if it had to. It has long defended the deal as good for gaming.

The deal still faces an obstacle in the United Kingdom, though one it now appears closer to surmounting.

British antitrust regulators on Friday extended their deadline to issue a final order on the proposed merger, allowing them to consider Microsoft's "detailed and complex submission" pleading its case.

The Competition and Markets Authority had rejected the deal over fears it would stifle competition for popular game titles in the fast-growing cloud gaming market.

But the U.K. watchdog appears to have softened its position after Corley thwarted U.S. regulators' efforts to block the deal.

The authority says it has pushed its original deadline back six weeks to Aug. 29 so it could go through Microsoft's response, which details "material changes in circumstance and special reasons" why regulators shouldn't issue an order to reject the deal.

GOP attorneys general shift battle over affirmative action to workplace

NEW YORK (AP)—Thirteen Republican state attorneys general are cautioning CEOs of the 100 biggest U.S. companies on the legal consequences for using race as a factor in hiring and employment practices, demonstrating how the Supreme Court's recent ruling dismantling affirmative action in higher education may trickle into the workplace.

The state attorneys general sent a letter to the CEOs on Thursday arguing that the controversial June ruling declaring that race cannot be a factor in college admissions — consequently striking down decades-old practices aimed at achieving diverse student bodies — could also apply to private entities, like employers.

"Treating people differently because of the color of their skin, even for benign purposes, is unlawful and wrong," they wrote. The GOP officials also suggested that Diversity, Equity and Inclusion programs could be a form of discrimination.

The letter and similar actions elsewhere have raised questions about the far-reaching consequences of the Supreme Court decision beyond higher education. But experts note the court's ruling itself doesn't directly change current employer obligations or commitments to DEI.

"The decision itself does not legally impact Title VII (of the Civil Rights Act), which is what governs employment discrimination or discrimination in the workplace," Greg Hoff, associate counsel of the HR Policy Association, told The Associated Press.

Hoff and others say the court's ruling only applies to higher education institutions and other entities that receive federal funding. They also note that affirmative action in college admissions is very different from DEI efforts in workplaces, which can include expanding outreach for new hires, creating employee resource groups for underrepresented workers, and reducing bias in hiring through such practices as "blind" applications.

"What we've been seeing a lot of since the decision came down is political opponents of DEI ... conflating affirmative action with DEI more broadly — because it serves their political purposes," said David Glasgow, executive director of the Meltzer Center for Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging at New York University's School of Law. "I think there's a lot of quite deliberate attempts to muddy the waters here."

Nation

AFTER MASS SHOOTING

Baltimore leaders slam police for inadequate response

BALTIMORE (AP)—Nearly three hours before a mass shooting turned a south Baltimore neighborhood block party into a scene of terror and bloodshed, the city's police department received a call about hundreds of partygoers armed with guns and knives—but on-duty officers decided no police services were required.

The decision contributed to a "catastrophic breakdown" in police communication and response during the hours leading up to the July 2 shooting, top city officials said at a city council hearing Thursday evening.

Baltimore's troubled history with policing was thrust into the national spotlight years ago following the 2015 death of Freddie Gray in police custody. Since then, city leaders have focused on reforming the Baltimore Police Department and repairing public trust, especially within the Black community. Critics say this latest failure threatens to jeopardize recent progress.

Two people died and 28 others were wounded when gunshots tore through a large crowd filling the courtyard of the Brooklyn Homes public housing complex as the annual summertime celebration continued after nightfall. Most victims were teenagers and young adults. Officials said there were multiple shooters but haven't provided an exact number. Police arrested one teenager accused of bringing a gun to the event, but he hasn't been charged with shooting anyone.

AP

A police officer stands in the area of a mass shooting incident in the Southern District of Baltimore, Sunday, July 2, 2023.

In the immediate aftermath, residents and community leaders said the tragic outcome is yet another symptom of a condition the majority-Black south Baltimore community has been experiencing for generations: neglect. They questioned whether police would have responded differently if the incident unfolded in a more affluent area.

"If the answer is yes, the question is why," City Council President Nick Mosby said during opening remarks.

Throughout the hours-long hearing, he repeatedly asked law enforcement leaders to acknowledge that police engagement varies based on ZIP code and socioeconomic status. Meanwhile the city's rampant gun violence is heavily concentrated in its poorest neighborhoods.

"All citizens … in the city of Baltimore deserve the same level of service," Mosby said.

Acting Police Commissioner Richard Worley, who assumed leadership of the department last month after his predecessor resigned, said the agency is conducting a comprehensive review to determine what went wrong the night of July 2.

He said higher-ups weren't informed about the block party, even after reports of several hundred participants being potentially armed and disorderly. That call came in around 9:40 p.m., according to the department.

Another call about possible gunshots came about an hour later, Worley said. The department sent its helicopter to survey the scene and officers determined the sounds were actually fireworks. They did nothing to disperse the crowd, which had grown to several hundred people.

Deadly gunfire broke out around 12:30 a.m., scattering the group as victims ran for their lives and residents searched frantically for loved ones in the ensuing chaos.

In years past, the police department stationed officers at the annual Brooklyn Day event, but this year it slipped through the cracks, Worley said. During daylight hours, the party featured pony rides and other activities for children while adults grilled hamburgers, mixed drinks and socialized with old friends.

The Baltimore Police Department has been under a federal consent decree since 2017 because a U.S. Department of Justice investigation found a pattern of unconstitutional policing practices. Worley said the consent decree monitoring team, which helps oversee the court-ordered reform process, will be heavily involved in reviewing the shooting response.

He said Baltimore police leaders are consulting with their counterparts in other cities that have experienced high-profile mass shootings, including Las Vegas and Aurora, Colorado.

"We're going to get to the bottom of it, find out what happened and fix it," he said.

Rep. Santos repays himself $85K raised from reelection fundraising

NEW YORK (AP)—Embattled freshman U.S. Rep. George Santos, a Republican from New York charged with a host of financial crimes, including embezzling money from his campaign, withdrew $85,000 from his campaign to help repay hundreds of thousands of dollars he loaned himself to get elected in 2022.

Congressional campaign records released Friday show Santos raised a relatively paltry $138,000 during the last three months for a reelection bid that is expected to be one of the country's most-watched and hotly contested races in 2024.

The records show he spent nearly $118,000, the bulk of it to begin repaying the more than $700,000 he loaned himself for his successful but surprising victory last year.

The underwhelming fundraising suggests potential struggles in fending off a challenge from fellow Republican Kellen Curry, an Afghanistan war veteran and former J.P. Morgan banker, who raised more than $200,000 and spent $36,000 during the same period.

Meanwhile, the top Democrat vying for New York's Third Congressional District, Nassau County legislator Joshua Lafazan, has raised more than $345,000, with much of it still in the bank.

Santos pleaded not guilty in May to a 13-count federal indictment charging him with looting his campaign coffers, fraudulently receiving unemployment and lying to Congress about being a millionaire. He faces up to 20 years in prison if convicted.

A day later, he signed an agreement with Brazilian officials that allowed him to avoid prosecution for forging two stolen checks in 2008.

Despite his legal woes, Santos has vowed to fight to keep his congressional seat, which mostly encompasses the western suburbs of Long Island but also straddles parts of the Queens borough in New York City.

Fellow Republicans in his home district and elsewhere, including some fellow GOP members in the state's congressional delegation, have urged him to abandon his reelection plans.

Complicating matters is whether congressional districts will again have to be redrawn, which could mean trouble for some Republican incumbents if congressional lines are moved to make districts more favorable to Democrats.

Vermont starts long road to recovery from historic floods

By KATHY McCORMACK and PATRICK WHITTLE
ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Marshfield Village Store, which sits at the junction of two country highways in a tiny Vermont town, has become a little bit of everything in recent days as residents struggle to recover from historic floods that battered the state.

First the shop in Marshfield, about 45 miles (70 kilometers) east of the state's biggest city, Burlington, served as a shelter for about three dozen people. By Friday it was a distribution center for much-needed fresh water and a go-to for supplies.

"We're about to start putting it out more formally, if there are other folks who haven't been able to get the support that they need yet, so that we can get equipment and volunteers to them, emergency medication, work on their properties, that's where we're at right now," said Michelle Eddleman McCormick, the store's general manager.

Storms dumped up to two months' worth of rain in a couple of days in parts of the region earlier this week, surpassing the amount that fell when Tropical Storm Irene blew through in 2011 and caused major flooding. Officials called this week's flooding the state's worst natural disaster since floods in 1927, and some suggested storms like this showed the impacts of climate change.

More rain is expected in the coming days, and Vermont authorities said Saturday that brings the possibility of landslides.

The flooding has been blamed for one death: Stephen Davoll, 63, drowned in his home Wednesday in Barre, a central Vermont city of about 8,500 people, according to Vermont Emergency Management spokesman Mark Bosma. He urged people to continue taking extra care as they return to their homes and repair damage.

"The loss of a Vermonter is always painful, but it is particularly so this week," U.S. Sen. Peter Welch said in statement.

It was the second flood-related death stemming from a storm system and epic flooding in the Northeast this week. The first was in upstate New York, where a woman was swept away by floodwaters in Fort Montgomery, a small Hudson River community about 45 miles (72 kilometers) north of New York City.

President Joe Biden on Friday approved Vermont Gov. Phil Scott's request for a major disaster declaration to provide federal support. Scott also said late Friday he has asked the U.S. Department of Agriculture to issue a disaster designation for the state due to damage to crops.

Farms were hit hard, just after many growers endured a hard freeze in May. It's expected to "destroy a large share of our produce and livestock feed," Vermont Agriculture Secretary Anson Tebbetts said at a news conference. It was too soon to determine damage costs, he said.

"In our mountainous state, much of our most fertile farmland lies in river valleys, and countless fields of corn, hay, vegetables, fruit, and pasture were swamped and buried," Scott said.

Assessors from the Federal Emergency Management Agency were scheduled to begin inspecting hard hit areas of Vermont on Saturday. That will help determine who will qualify for government assistance. U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg is also scheduled to arrive in the state next week to survey flood damage.

The state and others in the Northeast, including New Hampshire and Maine, are bracing for more wet weather expected to hit Sunday and into next week. The New Hampshire Department of Safety and the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services said they are closely monitoring water levels across the state.

World

S. Korea to expand support for Ukraine as Yoon makes surprise visit

KYIV, Ukraine (AP)—South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol made a surprise visit to Ukraine on Saturday, offering support for the invaded country in its war with Russia while demonstrating his own nation's cooperation with NATO.

Yoon's office said he traveled to Ukraine with his wife, Kim Keon Hee, following trips to Lithuania for a NATO summit and to Poland. It's his first visit since Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022.

Yoon toured Bucha and Irpin, two small cities near Kyiv where bodies of civilians were found in the streets and mass graves after Russian troops retreated from the capital region last year. He laid flowers at a monument to the country's war dead, before he sat down for a summit with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

South Korea, a key U.S. ally in Asia, joined international sanctions against Russia and has provided Ukraine with humanitarian and financial support to Ukraine. But the Asian nation, a growing arms exporter, hasn't provided weapons to Ukraine in line with its longstanding policy of not supplying arms to countries actively engaged in conflict.

During a joint news conference with Zelenskyy later Saturday, Yoon announced plans to expand support shipments to Ukraine but didn't touch upon weapons supplies.

Yoon began his statement with a mention of the U.N. forces' support of South Korea during the 1950-53 Korean War that helped repel a North Korean invasion.

"The current situation facing Ukraine reminds us of the past situation of the Republic of Korea," Yoon said.

Zelenskyy thanked Seoul for its "firm support of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity" and the "significant political, security, economic and humanitarian aid" it has supplied since the start of Russia's invasion.

Yoon said that South Korea will increase the shipments of nonlethal military items such as body armor and helmets this year. He said that South Korea will also provide humanitarian aid worth $150 million this year, up from $100 million last year. He said that South Korea has also sent the de-mining equipment and other aid items that had been requested by Ukraine.

Yoon said that he and Zelenskyy agreed on cooperating on post-war reconstruction efforts in Ukraine. Yoon said South Korea will also launch a scholarship fund named after him and Zelenskyy to expand support for Ukrainian students in South Korea.

South Korea isn't a NATO member, but like Japan, Pakistan and a handful of other countries, it's considered a global partner of the military alliance. Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida visited Ukraine in March.

In his recent written responses to questions from The Associated Press, Yoon said that the security of the Atlantic and Indo-Pacific regions is closely intertwined, saying: "In particular, the war in Ukraine has reminded us all that a security crisis in one particular region can have a global impact."

Yoon took office last year amid a mix of tough foreign policy challenges such as North Korea's advancing nuclear program and the intensifying rivalry between the U.S., South Korea's main security ally, and China, its biggest trading partner.

During a January visit to South Korea, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg called for the country to provide direct military support to Ukraine, saying Kyiv was in urgent need of weapons to fight off the prolonged Russian invasion.

France celebrates Bastille Day with parades and parties

PARIS (AP)—French fighter jets trailed red-white-and-blue smoke over Paris monuments, families held picnics and firefighters hosted holiday balls around France to celebrate Bastille Day on Friday, a moment of much-needed festivity after mass protests, riots and political divisions that have riven the country this year.

Not everyone was feeling the spirit of "liberty, equality and fraternity" that the holiday aims to embody. Traditional fireworks displays were banned in some towns, and trams and buses halted after dark across France to prevent new unrest in underprivileged neighborhoods. And an exceptional 130,000 police were deployed around the country to maintain order.

This year, the celebrations marking the start of the French Revolution on July 14, 1789 come in the wake of the nation's most serious urban violence in nearly 20 years, following the fatal police shooting of a teenager with North African roots that laid bare anger over entrenched inequality and racial discrimination.

Fighter jets and military helicopters whooshed Friday above the site where 17-year-old Nahel Merzouk was killed last month, on Nelson Mandela Square in the Paris suburb of Nanterre, on their way toward the Arc de Triomphe and the VIP guests watching the grandiose Bastille Day parade. Nanterre's streets were unusually quiet as local residents gathered to watch the flyby.

Just a few kilometers (miles) away, crowds lined the Champs-Elysees to watch the annual parade, which included 6,500 people marching, 94 planes and helicopters, 219 ground vehicles, 200 horses and 86 dogs this year.

India was the guest of honor, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi watching alongside French President Emmanuel Macron. About 240 Indian troops led the march, and French-made Indian warplanes joined the aerial display. France often showcases international partners on Bastille Day.

Russia's war in Ukraine — central to last year's Bastille Day celebrations – echoed in this year's events as well. Vehicles on display included the Caesar anti-missile batteries that France is providing to Ukraine, and Ukrainian officials were invited to join Macron in the VIP seats. Macron gave a posthumous Legion of Honor award to French journalist Arman Soldin, killed in Ukraine earlier this year.

WORLD BRIEFS

China, ASEAN agree to try to conclude nonaggression pact on sea feud in 3 years

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP)—China and Southeast Asian nations agreed Thursday to try and conclude within three years a long-delayed nonaggression pact aimed at preventing the frequent territorial spats in the busy South China Sea from turning into a major armed conflict. China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations agreed Thursday during a meeting between the 10-nation bloc's foreign ministers and China's top diplomat Wang Yi in the Indonesian capital of Jakarta to guidelines to complete their code of conduct negotiations before fall 2026, a Southeast Asian diplomat involved in the meetings told The Associated Press. The diplomat spoke on condition of anonymity due to a lack of authority to discuss the issue publicly ahead of the official announcement of the agreement. China and four of ASEAN's member states—Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam—along with Taiwan have been locked in a decades-long territorial standoff in the disputed waterway, a key passageway for global trade that is believed to be sitting atop vast undersea deposits of oil and gas. The contested territory has long been feared as an Asian flashpoint and has become a sensitive front in the U.S.-China rivalry in the region.

7 bodies pulled from flooded tunnel in S. Korea

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—South Korean rescue workers pulled seven bodies from a flooded tunnel where around 15 vehicles were trapped in muddy water, as days of heavy rain triggered flash floods and landslides and destroyed homes, leaving at least 33 people dead and forcing thousands to evacuate, officials said Sunday. Nearly 400 rescue workers, including divers, were searching the tunnel in the central city of Cheongju, where the vehicles, including a bus, were swamped by a flash flood Saturday evening, Seo Jeong-il, chief of the city's fire department, said in a briefing. Photos and video from the scene showed rescue workers establishing a perimeter and pumping brown water out of the tunnel as divers used rubber boats to move in and out of the area. Yang Chan-mo, an official from the North Chungcheong provincial fire department, said it could take several hours to pump out all the water from the tunnel, which was still filled with 4 to 5 meters (13 to 16.4 feet) of water dense with mud and other debris. Workers were proceeding slowly with the work to prevent any victims or survivors from being swept out, Yang said.

2,000 evacuated in La Palma wildfire in Spain's Canary Islands

BARCELONA, Spain (AP)—More than 2,000 people were evacuated as a wildfire rages "out of control" on La Palma in Spain's Canary Islands on Saturday, destroying around a dozen homes, authorities said. The blaze has affected an area of about 4,500 hectares (11,000 acres) and officials warned residents that the situation could worsen because a heat wave has made the terrain tinder-dry. "The fire has spread very fast," Canary Islands regional president Fernando Clavijo said. "The fire is out of control." He said that some residents didn't want to abandon their homes, and he appealed for people to be responsible and heed the calls for evacuation. Clavijo said that he was very concerned about the possibility of shifting winds at night, saying they could make the evacuation operation more dangerous. He said that 10 aircraft were battling the fire, and that water-dropping planes were expected to arrive. The wildfire and evacuations come nearly two years after a three-month volcanic eruption caused devastation on La Palma. While nobody was killed, around 3,000 buildings were buried along with many banana plantations, roads and irrigation systems.

In Loving Remembrance of our Beloved
Sabina Ingereklii Cabrera
Fondly known as "Sabi" & "Bina"
March 29, 1939 - July 11, 2023
Eucharistic celebration is offered daily at Santa Soledad Church at 6:00 p.m. from July 11 to 23, 2023. Wake and funeral services will be announced at a later date.
Your thoughts and prayers are sincerely appreciated.
Thank you and Si Yu'us Ma'ase.
From the Family

Health & Wellness

What exactly is aspartame and what's the controversy?

By KELLY YAMANOUCHI
The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

An agency of The World Health Organization, The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), has declared that the artificial sweetener aspartame is a possible human carcinogen.

This could have major implications for Atlanta-based Coca-Cola Co., which uses aspartame in some of its products including Diet Coke, Coke Zero Sugar and other diet and Zero beverages.

Coca-Cola says research shows aspartame "is safe for people to consume." So does the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

So what exactly is aspartame and how has this controversy evolved?

Here's what you need to know.

JUSTIN SULLIVAN/GETTY IMAGES/TNS

Packages of Equal and Splenda artificial sweeteners are displayed at a coffee shop April 9, 2007, in San Rafael, California.

What is aspartame?

Aspartame is a chemical sweetener that's about 200 times sweeter than sugar. It was introduced to replace sugar as a sweetener.

Aspartame is a dipeptide composed primarily of two amino acids—phenylalanine and aspartic acid. When they are combined to form aspartame, they produce an intensely sweet taste, according to the FDA.

What is aspartame in?

Aspartame is in sweeteners Equal, NutraSweet and Sugar Twin. It is used as a sweetener for soft drinks and other beverages, medicine, sugar-free gum and candy.

Aspartame is not heat stable so it typically isn't used in baked goods.

When was aspartame introduced?

Aspartame was discovered in 1965 by James M. Schlatter, who was researching antiulcer drugs and "discovered the sweetness completely by accident, after licking it off his finger, against work safety regulations," according to a study on aspartame published in the journal Nutrients.

The FDA first issued a regulation for aspartame in 1974 for use as a tabletop sweetener and in chewing gum, cold breakfast cereals, and dry bases for certain foods including beverages, instant coffee and tea, gelatins, puddings and fillings, and dairy products and toppings.

Since that time, the FDA approved aspartame for other uses, including as a general-purpose sweetener in 1996.

When did the controversy over the safety of aspartame begin?

A series of investigative articles published by UPI in 1987 reported concerns about possible health effects of aspartame.

Researchers in 1996 published a study looking at brain tumor rates and environmental factors including aspartame, and concluded "that there is need for reassessing the carcinogenic potential of aspartame."

Numerous other studies over the years have looked at health effects of aspartame.

The FDA concluded that aspartame "is safe for the general population when made under good manufacturing practices and used under the approved conditions of use."

The American Cancer Society says the FDA's acceptable daily intake of aspartame is 500 mg per kilogram of body weight per day. The European Food Safety Authority recommended a lower threshold of 40 mg per kilogram of body weight per day, which would require an adult weighing 132 lbs to drink 12 cans of a diet soft drink with the maximum permitted level of aspartame, on a daily basis. The amount of aspartame in soft drinks "can be 3 to 6 times less than the maximum permitted levels," according to the American Cancer Society.

The American Beverage Association says: "For over four decades, the FDA has confirmed with six separate reviews that aspartame is safe for human consumption, most recently in 2021."

Mayo expert weighs in on WHO warning about aspartame sweetener as a possible cancer risk

By DEEDEE STIEPAN
Mayo Clinic News Network

A popular artificial sweetener that's widely found in sugar-free foods and beverages is being labeled as a possible cancer risk by the World Health Organization. WHO's cancer research agency, International Agency for Research on Cancer, determined aspartame to be a possible carcinogen after reviewing and assessing the potential carcinogenic effect of the sweetener, but says it's safe to consume in limited amounts.

Dr. Donald Hensrud, a Mayo Clinic physician specializing in nutrition and the editor of "The Mayo Clinic Diet," explains what this new classification means and why the risk is low.

"This new decision of declaring aspartame a possible carcinogen is going to add some confusion. First of all, the level of risk is low, but consuming something over many years, even in a low amount, may possibly add to the risk," says Dr. Hensrud.

The four classifications of carcinogens

A carcinogen is a substance, organism or agent capable of causing cancer. When classifying the risk that something causes cancer, IARC uses different levels based on the certainty of the evidence of the risk. Those categories are:

- Carcinogenic to humans
- Probably carcinogenic to humans
- Possibly carcinogenic to humans

IARC now labels aspartame as a possible carcinogen, the lowest of the three categories, indicating there is limited evidence linking it to cancer.

"A definite carcinogen would be cigarettes," explains Dr. Hensrud. "Cigarettes are known to cause lung cancer. However, we also know that not everyone who smokes gets lung cancer. Even with a definite carcinogen, there's some element of uncertainty with regard to risk."

What foods and beverages contain aspartame

Aspartame is a nonnutritive sweetener that's not found naturally in the food supply and has no nutritional value. It's used to provide sweetness without calories in many different products from diet sodas to sugarless gum.

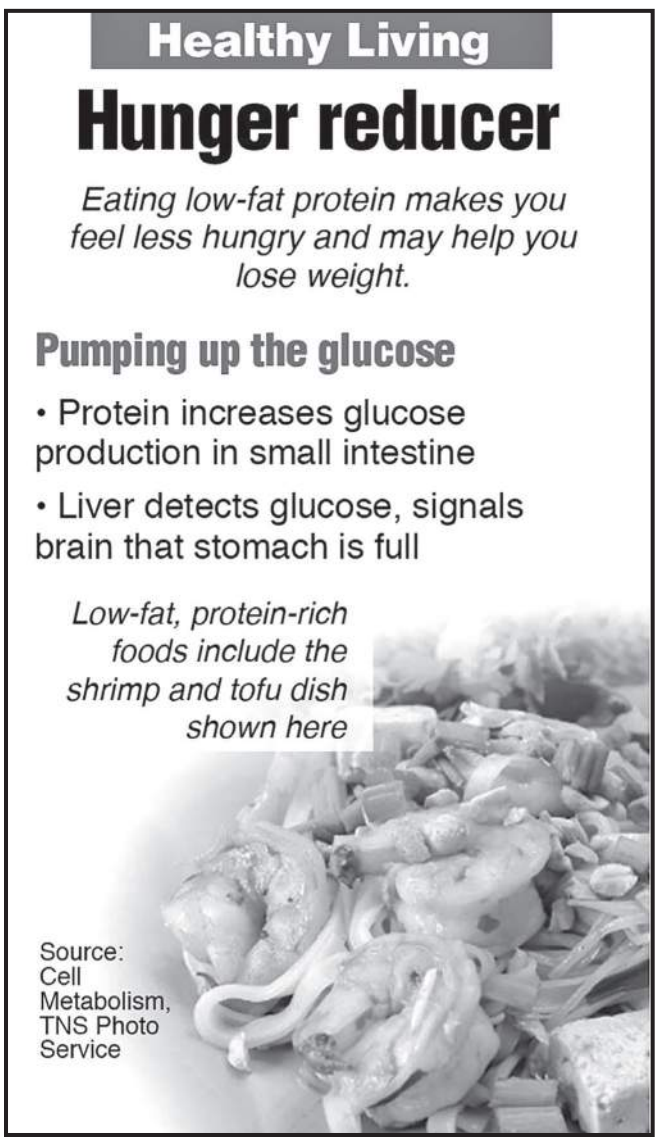
Should nonnutritive sweeteners be avoided completely?

"This new information on aspartame may cause some people to change their habits and cut down on foods that contain nonnutritive sweeteners. I don't think it would be a step up to add foods that have sugar in them, such as going back to regular soda instead of diet soda. If people can look at this and make healthier choices overall, such as carbonated water with a splash of flavoring or something like that, that would be a much better choice than going to back to added sugars," says Dr. Hensrud.

What's the big takeaway?

"Overall, a healthy diet that is composed of minimally processed foods and mostly plant products is the healthiest. In that overall dietary pattern, if including some products with nonnutritive sweeteners helps to decrease overall calorie intake, that may be beneficial to some people," says Dr. Hensrud.

"People may want to look at this information in the context of what they're doing and perhaps take a fresh look at their overall habits."


Healthy Living
Hunger reducer
Eating low-fat protein makes you feel less hungry and may help you lose weight.
Pumping up the glucose
• Protein increases glucose production in small intestine
• Liver detects glucose, signals brain that stomach is full
Low-fat, protein-rich foods include the shrimp and tofu dish shown here
Source: Cell Metabolism, TNS Photo Service

MAYO CLINIC MINUTE

Plant-based diet is encouraged for patients with cancer

By DEB BALZER
Mayo Clinic News Network

For patients diagnosed with cancer, is there one diet that is better than another? Dr. Dawn Mussallem, an integrative health specialist at Mayo Clinic, says it's not about one food or diet, but rather a dietary pattern that emphasizes a predominant plant-based diet that is high in fiber. And, Dr. Mussallem says, 97% of Americans aren't getting enough fiber.

"It's the dietary pattern that the organizations, such as the American Institute for Cancer Research and the American Cancer Society, recommend is a plant-predominant diet that has an emphasis on whole foods," says Dr. Mussallem.

That includes a variety of fresh vegetables and fruits, whole grains, beans, nuts, and seeds,

"It's good to have whole grains, not processed grains, but whole grains," she says.

Skip ultraprocessed foods. Limit or avoid red and processed meats. The American Cancer Society says it's unknown if there is a safe level of consumption for either red or processed meats.

"Processed meat is considered a carcinogen. And to replace some of that red meat component where folks get protein, you want to lean in on consumption of pulses," says Dr. Mussallem.

Pulses include legumes, or beans, lentils and peas. You'll add protein—and fiber.

"The American Institute for Cancer Research shows that for every 10-gram increase in fiber in the diet, you improve survival after cancer diagnosis by 13%," she says.

Life & Style

Lea Salonga heads all-Filipino cast in Broadway show

By TERRY TANG
ASSOCIATED PRESS

BONEAU/BRYAN-BROWN VIA AP

This image released by Boneau/Bryan-Brown shows Lea Salonga as Aurora Aquino, center, during a performance of "Here Lies Love," opening July 20 at the Broadway Theatre in New York.

Lea Salonga is back on the stage where her Broadway journey first began. But she isn't playing someone Vietnamese or Chinese or Japanese at the Broadway Theatre.

For the first time in her storied career, the Filipino musical legend is actually playing a Filipino. What's more, she is surrounded by an all-Filipino cast and she is part of a team of mostly Filipino producers that includes singer H.E.R., comedian Jo Koy and Black Eyed Peas' Apl.de.Ap.

Even when she was the lead at the same theater in "Miss Saigon" in 1991 and acted her way to a Tony Award, Salonga never imagined a Filipino-dominated production would become reality. She's topped other all-Asian Broadway casts ("Flower Drum Song," "Allegiance") but Filipino culture was never the one spotlighted.

"There's absolutely no 'effing way that I would have seen this happening. Ever," Salonga told The Associated Press in an interview earlier this month. "So, for it to be happening while I'm still actually strong enough to be on my feet and be a part of it, I'm just incredibly grateful."

The anticipation of getting to play a Filipino character for the first time is something shared by the entire company of "Here Lies Love." The first Broadway show with an all-Filipino ensemble opens July 20, a decade after it played off-Broadway.

But this isn't some light and airy musical. It chronicles the dictatorship of Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos in the 1970s and '80s and the pro-democracy People Power Revolution movement. Jose Llana, who was in the original iteration, and Arielle Jacobs play the dictator and first lady Imelda Marcos.

Musicians David Byrne and Fatboy Slim provide the soundtrack. The theater is laid out like a nightclub complete with disco ball. Audiences can choose to join or be in a standing-only area, making them feel a part of the party.

The praise for the groundbreaking representation has nearly been eclipsed by criticism, a lot of it from other Filipinos, arguing that the Marcos regime should not be musical fodder. This comes over a year after Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. was proclaimed president in the Philippines. He has ignored his father's massive human rights violations.

Salonga has vivid memories of watching news reports with her parents at home in the Philippines as the anti-Marcos People Power Revolution instigated a government overthrow. She also had friends who were out there in the chaos. So she understands why some people may have reservations about the show.

But "Here Lies Love" is more about the sacrifices made by anti-Marcos leaders like Ninoy Aquino (played by "How to Get Away with Murder" star Conrad Ricamora), she argues. August will mark 40 years since Aquino was assassinated at the airport in Manila, creating a flashpoint in the movement.

"It seems to be more of him and how his death sparked this anger and rage in a country and how it led to the People Power Revolution and how that led to the ousting of the Marcoses," said Salonga, who plays Aquino's mother, Aurora. "I come away with feeling hopeful when the show comes down. Because I saw in real time what was happening."

Llana, who was born in Manila but raised in the U.S., is playing the man who drove his family to flee their country. When he told his parents 10 years ago he'd be portraying Marcos off-Broadway, they watched the show without hesitation and liked it enough to make repeat visits. A decade later, they'll be there for opening night on Broadway.

"They know that I would never be a part of the show that glorified the Marcoses," Llana said. "Telling the history of the Philippines, sometimes it's not easy... When history repeats itself is when you don't talk about it and when you don't remember the bad things that happened. And that's really what our show is about."

In fact, after all these years, Llana's confidence in the show has only grown.

"There's less fear of whether it's going to work," said Llana, who was Salonga's love interest in "Flower Drum Song" over 20 years ago. "Now, it's just about polishing it and really fine-tuning the story and really resting into the new elements, which are our Filipino producers, Clint Ramos and Jose Antonio Vargas."

Arielle Jacobs, known for lead Broadway roles in "Aladdin" and "In the Heights," recently unearthed old emails from when she auditioned for the off-Broadway production.

"The feedback my agent was told from the casting director was they loved my audition, it's not going to work out right now but maybe potentially for future productions," Jacobs said. "That's so funny because at the time they didn't even know when or if it might come to Broadway."

Being in the show has helped Jacobs not be as "naive about the history." She has been doing research on her own to try and not make her Imelda one-dimensional. Born in San Francisco, Jacobs said her Filipino mother didn't really talk about the Marcos' era. But, nobody cried more happy tears than her mom when Jacobs landed this role.

Man's decisions in life are made to please others

DEAR ABBY: I'm a 54-year-old gay man who has spent his life making decisions with everyone else in mind. Every decision, life choice, relationship and career move has been based on how I'm perceived by friends and family.

Currently, I'm living with my ex in my home. I'd like to live alone, but I feel responsible for his security. When I think about telling him I want to live separately, I feel like I'm letting him down. If I move, my family then has opinions on where I should live so I will stay in proximity to them. Also, we share dogs and I'm afraid if we split up the pack, I'm letting the dogs down.

All of this pressure results in me doing nothing. I have been drinking more to shut out the noise. I have considered giving up alcohol, but that will also disappoint many in my family because they like to drink. Please help me!

GUILTY GUY IN MICHIGAN

DEAR GUY: If ever I've heard from someone who is in need of counseling, it is you—so that you can get in touch with who YOU are and what YOU want. You have a right to do what makes you happy. If there's an LGBTQ center near you, that would be the place to start. If there isn't, get counseling wherever it's available. If you want to quit drinking, just do it. If you are quiet about it, your family may not even notice. It may help you to think more clearly. The only thing you should NOT do is continue on the path you are on.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: My best friend of 20 years buys me, my son and my parents lots of thoughtful, wonderful gifts for holidays and birthdays. The problem is, it's way too much. She spends hundreds of dollars on us. I'm talking about mountains of gifts each year. My parents helped her financially a few years back when she was undergoing cancer treatment, and this is how she is repaying their generosity. But we don't need things; we just want her company.

Abby, she's now deep in debt and selling her house to pay down what she owes. As a result, she's moving across the country to live with her father, and I am preparing to miss her horribly. My parents and I have repeatedly asked her not to get us anything, but she keeps on shopping. I know this is her love language, but I also know she can't afford to be doing this, and I can't afford to reciprocate in kind. I don't know what else to do.

GENEROUS IN THE EAST

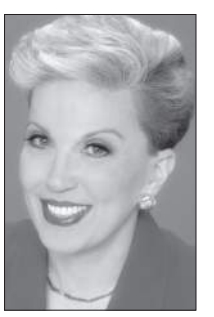
DEAR GENEROUS: Your friend may be excessively generous because she feels indebted to your folks for their generosity when she needed it, because gift-giving is her "love language" or she may just be a spendaholic. Tell her you love her and will miss her terribly when she moves away, but what she has been doing has been making you uncomfortable because you have everything you need and can't afford to reciprocate in kind. Then ask her again to stop, because the most important gifts she has already given you—her love and her many years of precious friendship.

■ ■ ■

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable – and most frequently requested – poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

By Abigail Van Buren
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

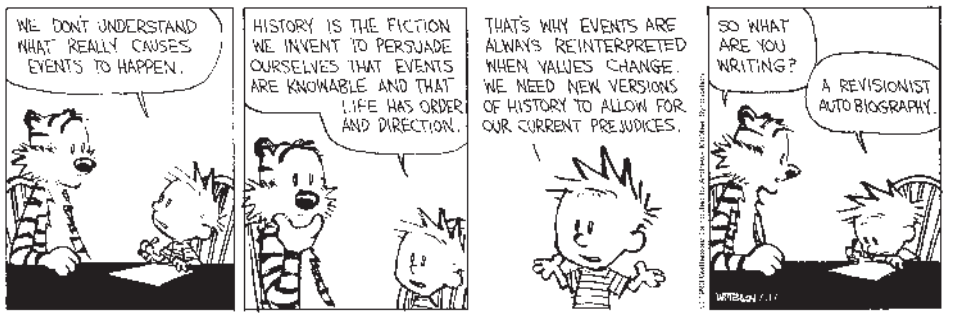


Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

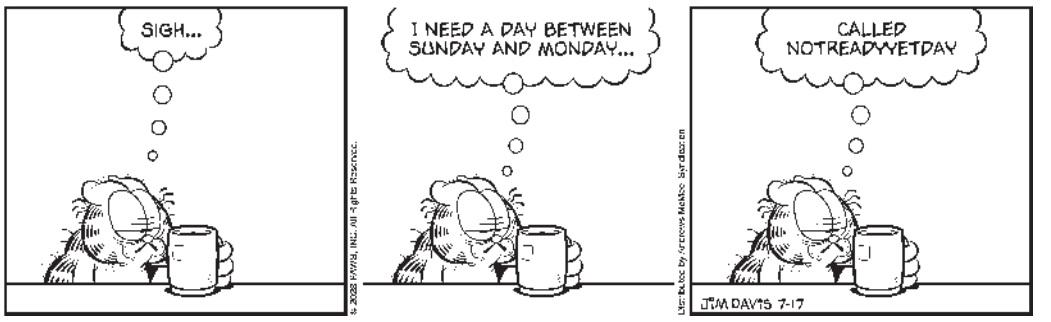
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


WE DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT REALLY CAUSES EVENTS TO HAPPEN.
HISTORY IS THE FICTION WE INVENT TO PERSUADE OURSELVES THAT EVENTS ARE KNOWABLE AND THAT LIFE HAS ORDER AND DIRECTION.
THAT'S WHY EVENTS ARE ALWAYS REINTERPRETED WHEN VALUES CHANGE. WE NEED NEW VERSIONS OF HISTORY TO ALLOW FOR OUR CURRENT PREJUDICES.
SO WHAT ARE YOU WRITING?
A REVISIONIST AUTO BIOGRAPHY.

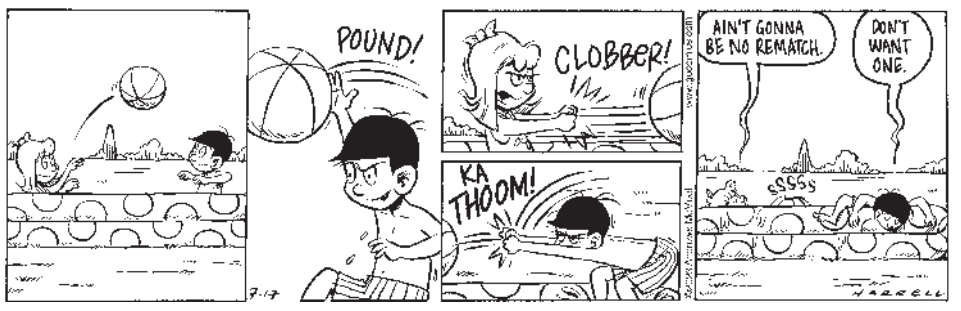
Garfield®

By Jim Davis



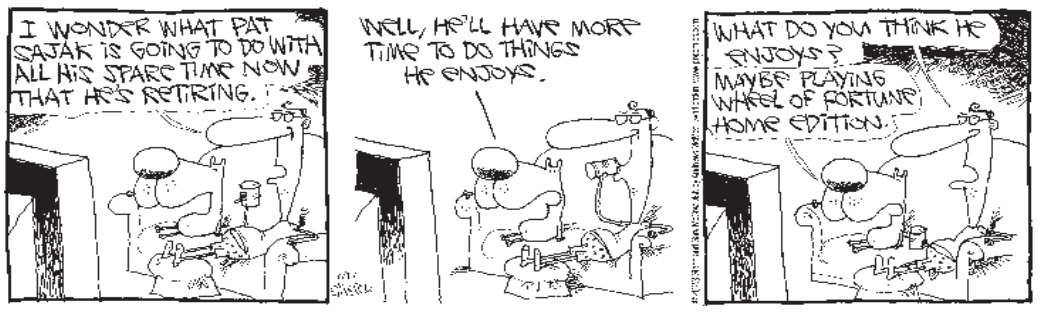
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy


I WONDER WHAT PAT SAJAK IS GOING TO DO WITH ALL HIS SPARE TIME NOW THAT HE'S RETIRING.
WELL, HE'LL HAVE MORE TIME TO DO THINGS HE ENJOYS.
WHAT DO YOU THINK HE ENJOYS?
MAYBE PLAYING WHEEL OF FORTUNE: HOME EDITION.

CROSSWORD

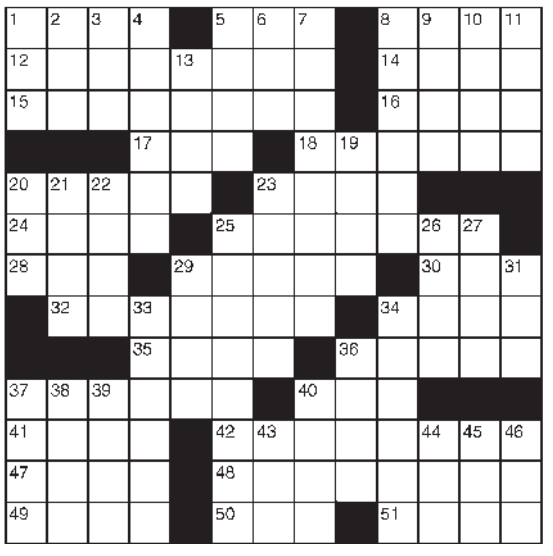
By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Outside (Pref.)
5 Boom times
8 Office note
12 Island of Italy
14 Utah city
15 More ghoulish
16 Iwo —
17 Pre-schooler
18 Frost remover
20 Boston team, in short
23 Legal wrong
24 A primary color
25 Solarium
28 Bando of baseball
29 — Major (constellation)
30 "Empire" actress Long
32 Having digits
34 Hurry
35 PTA and NEA, e.g.
36 Defeats
37 Sheep sounds
40 "In what way?"
41 Branch
42 Dishes not on the regular menu
47 Actress Falco
48 Susan of "Bull Durham"
49 City district
50 Globe
51 Toy store buy

DOWN
1 Computer key
2 Lincoln or Ford
3 Italian "three"
4 "Swan Lake" princess
5 One
6 Diner dessert
7 Mocking
8 Cuban rum cocktail
9 Guitarist Clapton
10 Viral video, e.g.
11 Actor Epps
13 Wall St. debuts
19 Messes up
20 "CSI" airer
21 Flair
22 Hum-dinger
23 North African capital
25 Sea of the North Atlantic
26 Burden
27 Fine spray
29 Michael of "Super-bad"
31 Spa sounds
33 Super-crowded
34 VCR button
36 — Raton
37 Erupted
38 Opera set in Egypt
39 "The Kite Runner" boy
40 Basil or thyme
43 Standard
44 Big fuss
45 Texter's chuckle
46 NBC show since 1975

J	O	T	■	E	P	I	C	■	S	T	A	B
A	D	A	■	M	A	B	L	■	P	O	S	L
Y	E	S	S	I	R	E	E	■	O	U	S	T
■	■	M	O	R	K	■	■	A	O	H	I	A
A	R	A	B	S	■	T	G	I	F	■	■	■
I	I	N	S	■	Y	O	U	R	S	O	N	G
L	A	I	■	R	A	G	A	S	■	U	A	R
Y	M	A	S	U	M	A	C	■	I	I	H	I
■	■	■	T	E	S	S	■	D	A	R	C	Y
P	I	Γ	A	D	■	■	Γ	A	T	Γ	■	■
L	E	A	R	■	Y	A	R	D	S	A	L	E
O	A	S	T	■	U	S	Γ	D	■	C	A	I
W	H	Y	S	■	K	A	T	Y	■	H	M	M

Last Friday's Answer 07/17



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Luke Bryan, 47; Carey Hart, 48; David Hasselhoff, 71; Donald Sutherland, 88.

Happy Birthday: An open mind will absorb information that will help you excel this year. Use your imagination to explore the possibilities and enrich your life. A passionate approach to life, love and happiness will prompt you to dream big. Change may not be your thing, but it will help you achieve your long-term goals this year. Step up and be the one to make a difference. Your numbers are 4, 11, 20, 24, 36, 39, 45.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Don't let outside influences cause upset. Concentrate on using your intelligence and knowledge to outmaneuver anyone in your way. Let your actions speak for you, and align yourself with people who share your concerns and goals. Mix business with pleasure. ✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Move forward, but don't make unnecessary changes. Focus on what makes you feel good about yourself and improves your health, appeal and ability to get ahead. Discipline and educational pursuits will broaden your awareness and possibilities. Don't exaggerate or believe everything you hear. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Don't limit your accomplishments. Choose the path that leads to more incredible opportunities. Reach out to experts and pick their brains. Make changes at home that complement your lifestyle. An unusual situation will turn into a worthwhile lesson. Protect your health and well-being. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Take nothing for granted and think outside the box. Keep simplicity in mind and use what's necessary to reach your goal. Do the work yourself; you'll set an example and feel good about your accomplishments. Don't exaggerate or renege on promises. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Do not sign up for more than you can handle. Refuse to let anyone pressure you or talk you into something that makes you uncomfortable. Put your energy, experience and knowledge into something promising. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Focus on opportunities, learn as you go and change what's necessary. Put faith in yourself and those who share your work ethic, and you'll find a way to improve your life and your financial future. Don't promise more than you can deliver. ✪✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Pay attention, don't lose sight of your goal and be mindful of what everyone says. Emotions will heat up if pressure is applied. Choose your words wisely and act with precision. Keep an open mind and a closed wallet. Protect your assets. ✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Embrace life, learn and make positive adjustments. Take care of your responsibilities. Research something you want to pursue and take preliminary measures to ensure success. Travel, communication and learning are favored. Don't make impulsive decisions. ✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Listen to your heart and express your feelings. Be cautious of people pushing false information. Do your research. Don't let others make decisions for you, and don't trust anyone using manipulative tactics to get you to enlist for something that makes you uncomfortable. ✪✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Pull things together, mix and match, and use alternative measures to reach your goal. Take pride in what you do, and don't fear being different. Make every penny, decision and move count. Share your feelings and intentions with someone you love. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Speak concisely and give others the same freedom you expect in return. Agree only to do what's reasonable, and refuse to let temptation result in overindulgence. Peace of mind is worthwhile and requires honesty, empathy and integrity. ✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Choose to be original. Let your creative imagination lead the way, and embrace what brings you joy. Spend time with individuals who can offer a different perspective on life. Change something or walk away from what no longer works for you. ✪✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are sensitive, energetic and flexible. You are imaginative and forceful.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

			9				6	3
		2		8	3		4	
	3	6		1	5	7		
	6	1			9		8	
		5	2			6	1	
4			1		8			9
6		3	5		1	2	9	4
2		4	8		6			
	1			4			5	

Difficulty: ★ 7/17

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Friday's Answer

8	1	3	5	7	4	9	6	2
5	9	7	1	2	6	4	8	3
2	4	6	3	9	8	7	5	1
6	8	1	2	4	7	5	3	9
3	2	4	8	5	9	1	7	6
7	5	9	6	1	3	8	2	4
9	3	2	4	8	5	6	1	7
4	6	5	7	3	1	2	9	8
1	7	8	9	6	2	3	4	5

Difficulty: ★★★★ 7/14

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

HISTORY BUFFS Solution: 10 letters

F	A	S	C	I	N	A	T	I	N	G	S	R	A	W
A	C	L	A	S	S	I	C	A	L	C	O	B	O	O
L	N	L	A	N	G	U	A	G	E	S	R	R	R	R
L	R	E	S	C	I	P	O	T	D	O	K	E	T	L
A	A	X	E	Q	I	N	G	I	N	N	T	S	N	D
U	E	C	U	H	L	D	S	Z	O	S	T	L	E	T
T	L	H	R	E	E	A	E	I	A	C	C	S	M	N
C	A	A	O	T	G	R	T	M	A	I	A	R	N	E
E	N	N	P	R	I	A	I	F	O	O	R	E	O	M
L	O	G	E	P	M	N	R	T	I	D	E	L	R	E
L	I	E	M	R	E	M	I	T	A	G	E	U	I	L
E	T	E	O	S	T	R	O	P	S	G	U	R	V	T
T	A	F	N	O	I	T	U	L	O	V	E	R	N	T
N	N	O	R	S	E	C	I	M	O	N	O	C	E	E
I	N	T	E	R	P	R	E	T	A	T	I	O	N	S

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Arts, Bronze, Classical, Disagree, Economic, Empire, Environment, Era, Europe, Exchange, Facts, Fall, Fascinating, Figures, Heritage, Information, Intellectual, Interpretations, Languages, Learn, Master, Medical, Modern, National, Norse, Qing, Revolution, Rulers, Settlement, Sports, Time, Topics, Wars, Work, World

Last Friday's Answer: Seedless

To purchase WONDERWORD books, visit www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480. (In Canada, call 1-855-232-2367)

Vondrousova first unseeded female champion after beating Jabeur

AP

Czech Republic's Marketa Vondrousova celebrates with the trophy after beating Tunisia's Ons Jabeur in the women's singles final on day thirteen of the Wimbledon tennis championships in London, Saturday, July 15, 2023.

WIMBLEDON, England (AP)—Marketa Vondrousova came to the All England Club a year ago unable to play tennis at all. She had a cast on her surgically repaired left wrist, so her visit was limited to sightseeing around London with her sister and cheering for a friend who was competing at Wimbledon.

This trip was a lot more memorable: She is leaving as a Grand Slam champion.

Vondrousova became the first unseeded woman to win Wimbledon on Saturday, coming back in each set for a 6-4, 6-4 victory over 2022 runner-up Ons Jabeur in the final.

"When I was coming back, I didn't know what's going to happen, if I can play at that level again," said Vondrousova, a 24-year-old left-hander from the Czech Republic who was the runner-up at the 2019 French Open on clay as a teenager and a silver medalist at the Tokyo Olympics on hard courts two years ago. "On grass, I didn't play well before. I think it was the most impossible Grand Slam for me to win, so I didn't even think of it. When we came, I was just like, 'Try to win a couple of matches.' Now this happened. It's crazy."

After being sidelined from April to October, she finished last season ranked just 99th. She was 42nd when she arrived at Wimbledon and was the first unseeded woman to even reach the final at the All England Club in 60 years — the last, 1963 runner-up Billie Jean King, was seated in the front row of the Royal Box on Saturday alongside Kate, the Princess of Wales.

Following the match, King greeted Vondrousova with a hug and told her: "First unseeded ever. I love it."

Centre Court's retractable roof was closed for the final, shielding everyone from the wind that topped 20 mph (30 kph) outside, and that allowed Vondrousova's smooth strokes to repeatedly find the intended mark. She also liked that she didn't have to worry about any gusts or the sun or anything else while playing — a reminder of days practicing at indoor courts during winters in Prague.

"I always play good indoors," Vondrousova said. "I was like, 'Yeah, maybe that's going to help me.'"

On this afternoon, she trailed in each set but collected the last four games of the first, then the last three games of the second as Jabeur fell to 0-3 in major finals.

The 28-year-old from Tunisia is the only Arab woman and only North African woman to make it that far in singles at any Grand Slam tournament.

"You cannot force things," the sixth-seeded Jabeur said. "It wasn't meant to be."

She lost to Elena Rybakina 12 months ago at the All England Club and to No. 1 Iga Swiatek at the U.S. Open last September.

"I think this is the most painful loss of my career," Jabeur said Saturday, pausing to wipe away tears.

Vondrousova's surge to her Slam title was hard to envision at the start of this fortnight.

She was 1-4 in previous appearances on Wimbledon's grass, only once making it as far as the second round, before going 7-0 on a run that included wins against five seeded foes.

One key was that Jabeur, who acknowledged feeling tension and pressure, kept making mistakes: She finished with 31 unforced errors; Vondrousova made merely 13.

That helped Vondrousova overcome deficits of 4-2 in the first set and 3-1 and 4-3 in the second. One she went ahead in each, the crowd's support for the popular Jabeur, nicknamed the Minister of Happiness for her demeanor on and off the court, would only rise, applause and shouts ricocheting off the cover atop the arena.

Staying steady down the stretch, Vondrousova broke to lead 5-4 and served for the match. She was soon up 40-love—and that's when the enormity of the moment hit her.

"I couldn't breathe," Vondrousova said. "I just was thinking to myself: 'Just be over.'"

When she ended the match by reaching to put away a volley, she tumbled to the grass, then laid on her back and put her hands over her visor and face, the happiest she's ever been on the surface.

She climbed into the stands to share hugs with her husband, who had been home on cat-sitting duty until going to England to watch the final in person. Vondrousova joked that his tears of joy at match's end were the most emotion he's shown in the eight years they've been together; their first wedding anniversary is Sunday.

Vondrousova has other plans for her first full day as a major title winner, too: She and her coach agreed to get tattoos if she won the trophy.

Alcaraz will face Djokovic in men's final for the ages

WIMBLEDON, England (AP)—Novak Djokovic paid quite a compliment to Carlos Alcaraz.

Before they'll face each other in the Wimbledon final on Sunday, Djokovic was asked to size up Alcaraz—and he compared the kid to himself.

Pretty good company.

"He's been incredibly successful in adapting to the surfaces and (to the) demands and challenges of opponents on a given day," Djokovic said. "I see this as a great trait, as a great virtue. I see this as one of my biggest strengths throughout my career, that I was able to constantly develop, adapt and adjust my game, depending on the challenges, basically. That's what he's doing very early on in his career."

And Alcaraz's assessment of Djokovic?

"He has no weakness. He's a really complete guy, really complete player. He's amazing. He does nothing wrong on the court," Alcaraz said. "Physically he's a beast. Mentally he's a beast. Everything is unbelievable for him."

The matchup on Centre Court at the All England Club to close the fortnight is absolutely the one both men expected. As did pretty much everyone else.

What more could tennis fans ask for?

"He's very motivated. He's young. He's hungry," Djokovic observed. "I'm hungry, too, so let's have a feast."

It is a showdown pitting one of the greatest players ever — many consider him THE greatest — in Djokovic, who is 36, against a rising new star in Alcaraz, who is 20. It is the widest age gap between two men's Grand Slam finalists since 1974, and Djokovic would become the oldest male champion at Wimbledon in the Open era.

Alcaraz is ranked No. 1, Djokovic is No. 2 (but has spent more weeks at No. 1 than anyone else, man or woman).

They showed they're a cut above the rest with straight-set victories in Thursday's semifinals: Alcaraz never gave No. 3 Daniil Medvedev a chance while beating him 6-3, 6-3, 6-3; Djokovic had a few tough spots he had to navigate but eliminated No. 8 Jannik Sinner 6-3, 6-4, 7-6 (4).

Medvedev went so far as to put Alcaraz in the category of the so-called Big Three of men's tennis: Djokovic, Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer.

"He's kind of like them," Medvedev said.

Djokovic has won 23 Grand Slam titles, more than any man in the century-plus history of tennis, and is seeking his men's-record-tying eighth at Wimbledon, including fifth in a row.

Alcaraz is a generational talent, the first teenager to finish a year atop the ATP rankings. He won last year's U.S. Open and now is bidding for a second major championship.

On top of it all, this is a rematch from the French Open semifinals last month. The first two sets of that contest were deliciously entertaining, chock full of highlight-worthy shots by both.

It was tense. It was tight. It was terrific.

And then it all came apart at the seams when Alcaraz succumbed to full body cramps that he attributed, at least in part, to nerves from going up against Djokovic on that stage and with those stakes. Djokovic ran away with the victory there, taking each of the last two sets by a 6-1 score.

"We had a very good match until he started struggling physically in Paris," Djokovic said. "We really took the level of tennis very high. I think it was great for the audience and great for us players to be part of that."

Not surprisingly, Alcaraz wants another shot at Djokovic.

Been talking about it over the past fortnight.

"Gives you extra motivation. It's more special to play a final against a legend from our sport," Alcaraz said. "Well, if I win, it could be amazing for me—not only to win a Wimbledon title, but do it against Novak, would be super special."

LeBron will return to No. 23 next season after switching from No. 6

LOS ANGELES (AP)—LeBron James is not only coming back for a 21st season, he's coming back in his original uniform number.

James will return to No. 23 next season, a move the Los Angeles Lakers revealed Saturday by tweeting a picture of his back with James' name and number showing on the gold jersey.

James has alternated between No. 23 and No. 6 after wearing 23 when he entered the NBA in 2003 with the Cleveland Cavaliers. He was in No. 6 while becoming the NBA's career scoring leader last season, a number now retired by the league following the death of Boston Celtics Hall of Famer Bill Russell.

Rich Paul, James' agent, told ESPN that James decided to make the switch out of respect for Russell.

James said Wednesday during the broadcast of the ESPY Awards that he would continue playing next season.

Cody Bellinger's grand slam lifts Cubs over Red Sox, 10-4

CHICAGO (AP) — Cody Bellinger hit a grand slam to back a solid effort by pitcher Marcus Stroman and the Cubs topped the Boston Red Sox 10-4 on Saturday.

Bellinger, who homered twice in Friday night's loss, capped a six-run third with his eighth career slam. Patrick Wisdom added a two-run shot, his 15th, an inning later off reliever Tayler Scott.

Triston Casas hit his 11th homer and Justin Turner doubled twice to stretch his hitting streak to 11 games for the Red Sox, who had won six straight.

James Paxton (5-2) sailed through the first two innings but quickly ran into trouble in the third, which began with a pair of walks wrapped around a hit batter. Nico Hoerner and Seiya Suzuki brought in runs by reaching on fielder's choice plays and Ian Happ walked to set the table for Bellinger, who knocked his 12th homer of the season into the netting in right center field.

"He's special," Stroman said of his teammate. "It's awesome to see Belli back to that MVP Belli.

"He's someone who changes an entire lineup. With one swing, he can change a game. Seeing him locked in is incredible."

The Cubs got two more off Brandon Walter in the seventh to turn the game into a rout.

Paxton, looking for his fourth win in as many starts, didn't return for the fourth after giving up six earned runs and walking three while striking out four.

AP

Chicago Cubs' Cody Bellinger hits a grand slam during the third inning of a baseball game against the Boston Red Sox Saturday, July 15, 2023, in Chicago.

YANKEES 6, ROCKIES 3

DENVER (AP) — Giancarlo Stanton homered for the fourth time in four games and reached 1,000 career RBIs by driving in four runs to power New York.

Stanton's three-run homer in the second capped a five-run inning off Connor Seabold (1-7) that built a 6-1 lead. Stanton, who has 12 homers at Coors Field, drove in the first run with a groundout in the first. He has 16 RBIs in his last 14 games.

Clarke Schmidt (5-6) gave up two runs and three hits in six innings while tying a career high with eight strikeouts. Clay Holmes pitched a one-hit ninth for his 11th save in 13 chances.

DJ LeMahieu had three hits, including two doubles back at Coors Field.

ORIOLES 6, MARLINS 5

BALTIMORE (AP)—Gunnar Henderson homered to start a two-run seventh-inning as Baltimore rallied to win its seventh straight.

Anthony Santander put Baltimore ahead with an RBI single later in the seventh, and the Orioles still dropped to two games behind first-place Tampa Bay in the AL East after the Rays swept a doubleheader at Kansas City.

The Marlins led 5-4 in the seventh when Henderson sent the first pitch from reliever Huascar Brazoban (3-2) to deep right field for his 14th homer. 0Brazoban allowed hits to four of his five hitters.

Mike Baumann (6-0) won in relief.

Miami's Luis Arraez had four hits to raise his average to .386, and Marlins outfielders Dane Myers and Jesús Sánchez were able to stay in the game after a scary outfield collision in the first.

WHITE SOX 6, BRAVES 5

ATLANTA (AP)—Jake Burger's sixth-inning homer off Spencer Strider gave Chicago the lead, Andrew Benintendi drove in three runs with three hits and the White Sox held on in the ninth inning.

Strider (11-3) struck out 10 to reach double digits for the seventh time this season but allowed five runs and eight hits in six innings. Strider had won his previous five starts.

Ronald Acuña Jr. had three hits, including two home runs, and drove in three runs for Atlanta.

Lance Lynn (6-8) allowed four runs in 5 1/3 innings as Chicago earned its first win in eight games in Atlanta. Kendall Graveman finished for his eighth save in 11 chances, getting Sean Murphy's game-ending double-play grounder.

PHILLIES 6, PADRES 4, 1st game; PHILLIES 9, PADRES 4, 2nd game

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—Bryce Harper ended the longest homerless streak of his major league career in the second game, and Philadelphia completed a doubleheader sweep.

Harper connected on a curveball from left-hander Ryan Weathers (1-6), tying the score 1-1 in the fourth inning. It was the fourth homer of the season for Harper, who made his season debut May 2 after recovering from Tommy John surgery. The home run was Harper's first since May 25 at Atlanta. He had gone 166 plate appearances without going deep.

Kyle Schwarber put Philadelphia in front for good with a three-run homer in the bottom half of the fifth.

Johan Rojas had three hits and two RBIs in the second game after making a spectacular catch in the first inning of the opener in his major league debut.

Taijuan Walker (11-3) allowed two runs and four hits in five innings to win the second game.

Schwarber hit a tying home run in the seventh inning of the opener, a 440-foot drive, and drove in the go-ahead run with a single in the eighth off Tim Hill (1-3).

Manny Machado's 300th homer had given San Diego a 4-3 lead in the eighth against Matt Strahm (6-3). Craig Kimbrel retired Machado with two on for his 15th save.

RAYS 6, ROYALS 1, 1st game; RAYS 4, ROYALS 2, 2nd game

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP)—Luke Raley had a go-ahead single in the eighth inning, and Tampa Bay completed a doubleheader sweep.

Jose Siri hit a pair of solo homers as the Rays won the first game to open the second half. AL East-leading Tampa Bay has won three in a row after a season-high, seven-game losing streak and at 60-35 became the first AL team to 60 wins.

Kansas City has lost eight of nine, dropping to 26-67 and falling 41 games under .500. The Royals were swept in a doubleheader for the first time since May 25, 2019, against the New York Yankees.

Dairon Blanco's RBI grounder in the fifth put the Royals ahead 2-1 in the nightcap. Josh Lowe tied the score with a run-scoring triple in the seventh and Raley singled in the eighth against Carlos Hernández (0-5). Harold Ramírez added a sacrifice fly in the ninth against Dylan Coleman.

Colin Poche (7-2) threw a 1-2-3 seventh. Pete Fairbanks worked around Salvador Perez's leadoff single in the ninth for his 10th save in 11 chances.

Tyler Glasnow (3-3) gave up six hits and struck out six in the first game.

GIANTS 3, PIRATES 1

PITTSBURGH (AP)—Michael Conforto hit a tiebreaking RBI single in the eighth inning and San Francisco won its fourth straight.

After LaMonte Wade Jr. walked and Joc Pederson singled with one out against rookie Carmen Mlodzinski (1-2), All-Star closer David Bednar entered and struck out J.D. Davis. Conforto then hit a line drive into right field. Wade scored on a play at the plate, beating right fielder Henry Davis' throw. Pederson also scored when Pirates catcher Jason Delay threw wildly to second in an unsuccessful bid to get Conforto.

San Francisco's Mike Yastrzemski and Pittsburgh's Henry Davis hit solo homers in the second inning.

Taylor Rogers (5-3) worked a scoreless seventh, and Camilo Doval worked around a leadoff single in the ninth for his major-league leading 28th save.

BLUE JAYS 5, DIAMONDBACKS 2

TORONTO (AP)—Chris Bassitt (9-5) allowed two runs and seven hits in six innings after Kevin Gausman was scratched early because of discomfort in his left side.

Whit Merrifield homered off All-Star starter Zac Gallen and Bo Bichette against Scott McGough, both solo drives. George Springer drove in two runs.

Yimi García got his second save as Toronto moved a season-best 11 games above .500 at 52-41.

Arizona has lost nine of 13.

NATIONALS 7, CARDINALS 5

ST. LOUIS (AP)—Lane Thomas hit a tiebreaking single in the 10th off Jordan Hicks (1-6) as Washington won the completion of a game suspended by rain in the third inning Friday.

Kyle Finnegan (4-3) pitched two innings for the win and Hunter Harvey got his ninth save.

RANGERS 2, GUARDIANS 0

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP)—Andrew Heaney rebounded from his worst start of the season and slumping Marcus Semien had his first multihit game in two weeks as Texas got its seventh shutout of the season.

Heaney (6-6) allowed six hits and one walk in 5 1/3 innings, striking out four. Aroldis Chapman struck out two in a one-hit ninth in his first save situation since he was acquired from Kansas City on June 30.

Semien, who entered in a 3-for-36 slide, had two singles, scored a run and added a sacrifice fly.

Cleveland's Gavin Williams (1-2) allowed both runs, four hits and four walks over five innings. The Guardians were blanked for the ninth time.

TWINS 10, ATHLETICS 7

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP)—Kyle Farmer had three hits including a go-ahead home run in the seventh inning, and Minnesota won its second straight.

Michael A. Taylor hit his 11th home run for the Twins and made a catch at the wall in center field to rob pinch-hitter Brent Rooker of extra bases in the sixth.

Ryan Jeffers walked twice, scored three runs and drove in one for Minnesota, which leads the AL Central at 47-46. Farmer homered off Freddy Tarnok (0-1).

Ryan Noda and Seth Brown homered for Oakland, which has lost six straight and is last in the AL West.

Jovani Moran (2-2) retired two batters to win. Jhoan Duran struck out two of the three batters he faced in the ninth for his 14th save.

DODGERS 5, METS 1

NEW YORK (AP)—Mookie Betts went 4 for 4 with a home run and Los Angeles won its sixth straight.

Max Muncy scored the tie-breaking run in the eighth inning on David Peralta's RBI grounder. Mets first baseman Pete Alonso had a chance to start an inning-ending double play, but his throw to second base forced shortstop Francisco Lindor to make a leaping grab and then find the bag, giving Peralta enough time to beat the relay at first.

Los Angeles added three insurance runs in the ninth, helped by a fielding error by rookie third baseman Brett Baty. J.D. Martinez and Peralta followed with RBI singles off Grant Hartwig.

Brandon Nimmo homered for the Mets, held to three hits one night after mustering just one, en route to their fourth straight loss.

Brusdar Graterol (3-2) worked a hitless seventh for the NL West leaders, who have won 14 of 19. Adam Ottavino (0-4) took the loss.

BREWERS 3, REDS 0

CINCINNATI (AP)—Freddy Peralta combined with three relievers on a one-hitter, Christian Yelich homered on the game's first pitch and Milwaukee shut out Cincinnati for the third straight game.

Playing six straight games against the Reds, Milwaukee has won four of the first five. The Brewers tied the Chicago Cubs, Los Angeles Dodgers and Toronto for the major league shutouts lead with 10.

Jake Fraley had the Reds' only hit, a broken-bat infield single with one out in the fourth. Cincinnati (50-43) has managed just seven hits in its last three games, none for extra bases.

Peralta (6-7) won for the first time since May 21. He struck out six and walked two in six innings. Evan Peguero, Joel Payamps and Devin Williams followed with an inning each, with Williams getting his 22nd save in 24 chances.

William Contreras homered in the fourth and Owen Miller in the seventh. Andrew Abbott (4-2) allowed two runs and three hits in six innings, and Miller homered off Buck Farmer.

Mahomes more focused winning more Super Bowls than legacy

By ROB MAADDI
AP PRO FOOTBALL WRITER

Patrick Mahomes already is a two-time Super Bowl MVP and AP NFL MVP before turning 28, compiling an impressive Hall of Fame-worthy resume in only six seasons.

If any player is ever going to challenge Tom Brady for GOAT—greatest of all time—status, Mahomes has the best chance. Like Brady and other superstar athletes, Mahomes still works to improve, aiming to keep the Kansas City Chiefs in Super Bowl contention.

"I think everybody thinks about legacy and how they're remembered, but you have to think about that at the same time, valuing every day and how you can become better, how you can really maximize every single day," Mahomes said on the AP Pro Football Podcast. "And then whenever your career is done, you have no regrets. That's what I've always preached. It's not about success of that day, it's about having no regrets at the end of your career.

"And I think if you work hard every single day and put everything you have into the game, then when you look back at the end of your career and however many trophies you have or how many Super Bowl rings you have, you'll have no regrets."

AP

Kansas City Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes arrives at a ceremony for team members to receive their championship rings for winning NFL football's Super Bowl LVII, Thursday, June 15, 2023, in Kansas City, Mo.

Mahomes has led the Chiefs to five straight AFC championship games, three Super Bowl appearances and two championships in his five seasons as the starting quarterback.

With Brady now retired after winning seven rings with New England and Tampa Bay, Mahomes takes over as the face of the NFL. It's just another title to the dynamic QB.

"I embrace being me," Mahomes said. "I think that's the biggest thing. It's definitely cool to see your name on the news line or to be able to partner with great companies like Walmart and do all these great things. But at the same time, I just try to be the best me I can be and whatever else comes with that comes with that."

No team has repeated as Super Bowl champs since Brady's Patriots in 2003-04. It's a daunting task in today's NFL. The Chiefs are embracing the challenge. They're favorites to win it again this season, according to FanDuel Sportsbook.

LA HUNN

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the finals today.

Lee said his son immediately went to the physiology tent after his semifinals match to get some treatment.

CNMI Sports Hall of Famer Jeff Race, meanwhile, said Lam was about to be retired by the tourney physiotherapist before being prevailed upon by him and two other officials from the International Tennis Federation.

"At 6-2, 5-2, 0-15 La Hunn called for the physio because his ankle hurt. The physio told him he was retiring him. Two ITF reps and myself came on the court to discuss. La Hunn's ankle was taped and he won four consecutive points to take the match. It'll make a very big difference in the opportunities he will get in the next year by making the finals."

Lam now faces Guam's Junhyuk Seo after the No. 1 seed defeated Lam's compatriot and doubles partner Nason Wessel, 6-2, 6-2, in the other semifinal pairing.

Last Friday, Lam and Wessel tag-teamed to advance to the semifinals of the boys 14 doubles after thumping Papua New Guinea's John Louie Domalaon and Solomon Islands' John Kennedy Taufunu 6-2, 6-1.

In the other quarterfinals of the boys 14 doubles, Ryan Choi and Siwoo Lee advanced after defeating Tahiti's Toanui Lee Tham and American Samoa's Aifili Tamasoaali'L, 6-4, 6-4.

June Yu beat Luke Pierre of Cook Islands, 6-1, 6-4, in a fifth-eight playoff match in the boys 16.

Siwoo Lee got the better of Tahiti's Matehau Sacault, 7-5, 6-2, in the boys 14 nine-16 semifinals.

Henry Seungwoo Choi lost to Federated States of Micronesia's Erwin Tayshawn, 3-6, 4-6, in the other bracket of the boys 14 nine-16.

Hoo Wang lost to Papua New Guinea's Pauline Hyun, 6-1, 6-0, in the girls 16 nine-16 playoffs.

Girls 16's Irin Chung lost to Fiji's Sina Izumi, 2-6, 4-6, in the playoffs for the ninth-16th spot.

In another playoff for the ninth-16th spot, this in the girls 14, Lina Tsukagoshi lost to Vanuatu's Alisha Kanegai, 4-6, 2-6.

In the boys 16, Simon Tang finally hit paydirt by beating Samoa's Titus Paul, 6-1, 6-1.

In the girls 14 quarterfinals, Anne Lee and Lina Tsukagoshi dropped a 3-6, 2-6 match against Vanuatu's Alisha Kanegai and Ashanti Ligo.

Aside from Race, Team NMI is accompanied by Colin Ramsey, the team's assistant coach and currently No. 1 singles player in the islands.

NMI

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NMI Swimming is proud of these dedicated athletes and wishes them great success!"

Kimura, meanwhile, said the team will leave Saipan at 7:25am this morning and will arrive at Fukuoka around 2:25pm. They will then proceed immediately to Jyounan City Pool to continue their training.

"We can use it through an arrangement with Japan's largest sports club, Central Sports," he said.

The CNMI swim team will then train at the competition venue itself at Marine Messe A on July 18.

"This is a special deal because the official opening for swimmer training is on July 19. I submitted a request to the organizing committee and got permission to use it directly from World Aquatics sports manager, Mr. Namhee Cho. The head coach of the Fukuoka University swim team, Yamaguchi, also gave us a good offer," said Kimura.

As for the competition proper that will be from July 23 to 29, the Tsunami Saipan Swimming Center head coach said the CNMI will do everything in their power to make their home islands proud.

"We will do our best to work together to produce good results. I would also like to bring Christian and swimmers to Ramen Alley," he said.

Aleksenko said as always he's excited to represent the CNMI in yet another FINA World Championships.

"I'm very excited to compete in this World Championship and hope to represent the CNMI the best I can. I hope to make new friends and enjoy my time there."

For Deleon Guerrero, being part of the CNMI national swimming team is a big honor.

"I am grateful for this opportunity given to us four as many kids of the CNMI have the chance to represent our islands on such a big scale. The anticipation continues to rise as we will see our efforts in training for over a month pay off."

Batallones, for her part, said she can't wait to compete against the world's best in Fukuoka.

"I'm excited to compete in such competitions with other experienced swimmers. It's fun to race with each other and make good memories. That is something I am looking forward to. I know my team is ready!"

Litulumar said she will soak everything in the Japan meet and hopes to swim her best there.

"I am very excited to compete in the Fukuoka World Aquatics! It has been so long since I've competed in a long course but I feel confident and ready. I will do my best and bring back good results!"

Last but not the least, the Japan meet is Villacrusis' first time to coach the CNMI team in the World Championships and that aside from the fact that Kimura promised them a trip to Ramen Alley is what he's most looking forward to.

"I am really excited to go to Fukuoka for the World Champs. The last time I went as a swimmer was in Budapest five years ago. This is my first time going as one of the coaches, so I will try my best to learn from our head coach, Hiro, while supporting the team in any way that I can. I know the kids will represent us well because I get to see how hard they train every single day. I'm also excited to eat some good ramen!"

The CNMI swimming team would like to extend their thanks to the following for helping them defray the cost of their participation to the 20th FINA World Championships: CNMI Legislature, Saipan Mayor Ramon B. Camacho, Aqua Resort Club, BAB Korean Restaurant, Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan, Dae Jang Kum Restaurant, Fishing Tackle, Gold's Gym, Islander Rent-a-Car, Korean House Restaurant, Lohas Massage, Mobil Oil Marianas, Pacific Islands Club Saipan, Pacific, Quick Print, Shell Marianas Corp., Saipan World Resort, Zen Corp. Zoom Chicken, SSC parents, Tsunami Saipan parents, and all who supported NMISF's fundraising activities.

LAKERS

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ters, Logan Daniel, and Bong Saralu and they took on Leon Duenas, Heman Addy, Joaltan Namauleg, and L.J. Dejillas.

Eleven-year-old Daniel said that winning the championship felt good and that the tournament turned out well. He said their team just tried to guard their best player from coming inside and kept getting the ball and making their shots.

Before the finals, 12-year-old Won, who is on summer vacation on Saipan and is the younger brother of CNMI national basketball players E'anna and Ky'Sonna Won, was interviewed and said that the tournament was fun.

The grade seven point guard from Ohio said, "It was good competition. I'm really nervous but excited about the finals," he said. Their strategy through the competition was to double team the team's best player while one is in the paint.

The Prospects team is coached by David John Apatang, Mike Mercado, and Matt Duenas. The team consists of young basketball players from 18 years old and under.

The tournament was an introduction for a lot of the young players to the sport of basketball. As to why the 3x3 format, Apatang said in their age group, "they need to learn how to space the court, which is what we lack a lot with the 5X5 format, so it helps them space the court and move the ball around and understand that their teammates are important. And it encourages them to love the game—which is what we're really here for: the love of the game."

Mercado said of the 30 plus players of the team, "the kids are all happy and that's what it's all about—to see these kids happy and to see them grow up to be better individuals."

Some of the players were interviewed and showed their enthusiasm for the sport by saying they enjoyed the tournament. Keith Agulto, a 13-year-old, said that he joined to get better in basketball and to have fun.

The coaches then thanked their sponsors Bella Wings Aviation, Bridge Capital LLC., NMTech, NMC, Hagu Real, D&Q, FSM Recycling, Rep. Manny Castro (Ind-Saipan), and Rep. John Paul Sablan (Ind-Saipan).

The first, second, and third place teams received over $2,000 worth of swag bags and prizes from the team's sponsors.

LEIGH GASES

The second place Warriors team poses for a photo with Prospects team coaches after the finals game of the 3x3 Basketball Tournament hosted by the new basketball team Prospects last Saturday evening at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

LEIGH GASES

The Lakers team, consisting of Logan Daniel, second left, Manai Won, Matthew Peters, and Bong Saralu, won first place in the 3x3 Basketball Tournament hosted by the new Prospects basketball team coached by Mike Mercado, far left, Matt Duenas, far right, and David John Apatang, back, third from right, last Saturday night at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Vondrousova is first unseeded female champion after beating Jabeur.

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La Hunn bucks injury to advance to finals

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

La Hunn Lam fought through a painful ankle injury to advance to the finals of the boys 14 division of the 2023 Pacific Oceania Junior Championships yesterday in Lautoka, Fiji.

After rain wiped out the slate of games last Saturday and early Sunday morning, Lam finally saw action against Tahiti's Toanui Lee Tham.

Lam and Tham were teammates in the 2023 ITF World Teams Competition Asia/Oceania Pre-Qualifying Events in Colombo, Sri Lanka last February.

Lam dominated the game early and often and was headed to an easy straight sets win—his fifth straight dominating performance in Fiji—when tragedy struck with him leading, 5-2, in the second set.

"La Hunn twisted his ankle so had to make a decision whether he plays or not… He will go play in the finals but not really in good condition because of his ankle," said Lam's mother Joo Lee in a social media message to the *Saipan Tribune*.

Lam won the game, 6-2, 6-2, against Tham but it's anybody's guess if his twisted ankle will be ready in time for

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OTF
La Hunn Lam, second from right, poses with other CNMI players during a break in the 2023 Pacific Oceania Junior Championships in Lautoka, Fiji.

Lakers win 3x3 hoops tournament

LEIGH GASES
Lakers point guard Manai Won attempts a jump shot over a Warriors defender during the finals of the 3x3 Basketball Tournament hosted by the new basketball team Prospects last Saturday evening at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Newfound basketball team, Prospects, hosted an in-house 3x3 basketball tournament last Friday and Saturday among its team members, with Team Lakers taking home the championship against the Warriors, in a close 9-7 finals at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

The Lakers finally won a championship in the form of young CNMI basketball stars as they spearheaded the winners bracket from Day 1. They first defeated the Nuggets, the Hornets, the Heat, and then the Warriors in the finals on the last day of the tournament.

The Lakers consisted of young basketball phenom Manai Won, Matthew Pe-

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NMI swim team off to FINA World Championships

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The CNMI swimming team, composed of six swimmers, two coaches, and an official, will leave for Fukuoka, Japan this morning to compete in the 20th FINA World Championships.

Northern Mariana Islands Swimming Federation vice president John Hirsh said swimmers Isaiah Aleksenko, Jakey Deleon Guerrero, Maria Batallones, and Shoko Litulumar, coach Hiroyuki Kimura, and assistant coach Christian Villacrusis are all stoked to take part in the 2023 World Aquatics World Championships.

"They've been training very hard to ensure they're in the best possible condition to swim well. Each swimmer will swim two events and a relay over the one-week pool competition. While not in the pool our team can enjoy the very best in aquatics by watching water polo, artistic swimming, diving, and open water events. In addition I'll be attending the swimming events as well as representing our federation at various meetings," he said.

Hirsh thanked World Aquatics for the CNMI swimmers and coaches' opportunity to participate in the 20th FINA World Championships. He also gave kudos to the swimmers' parents and the swimmers themselves for their dedication to training and eagerness to represent the islands.

"In addition the swimmers reached out to the community for extra support to help offset the costs of travel and housing at the Championships.

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
From left, CNMI national swimming team assistant coach Christian Villacrusis, swimmers Jakey Deleon Guerrero, Shoko Litulumar, NMISF vice president John Hirsh, swimmers Maria Batallones and Isaiah Aleksenko, and head coach Hiroyuki Kimura pose beside the Pacific Islands Club Saipan pool last week.